

Published online only

# The JOURNAL

The newspaper of the Parish of St John the Baptist, Andover.  
Including: St John Fisher, Whitchurch and  
The Chapel of St Theresa of Lisieux, Farleigh

Issue  
No 358  
April  
2024

## The Pope's Easter Message

**A**fter presiding over an open-air Mass in St Peter's Square on Easter Sunday, Pope Francis delivered the traditional Easter Message "Urbi et orbi" – to the city and the world.

Reflecting on the words of St Luke "He is not here, he has risen" the pope emphasised the Gospel message of hope, life, and love.

He commented on the suffering endured by so many throughout the

world, so many people whose lives were affected by suffering and death. Yet the Resurrection of Our Lord tells us that through the darkness comes life and light. The empty tomb signifies life's triumph over death, Christ has conquered death, so despite the senseless deaths caused by conflict and senseless behaviour in many parts of the world we can still find hope in Christ's words: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live."

The women were amazed at finding the tomb empty, and each Easter the Church relives that amazement. A great stone had sealed the tomb, just as great stones block the path of humanity; the stones of war, of humanitarian crisis, of violated human rights, of human trafficking. Christ can roll away those stones for us. He shows a new path that leads from the empty tomb. If we choose, we can follow Christ who is the path of life in the midst of death, of peace in the midst of war, of reconciliation in the midst of hatred, of brotherhood in the midst of hostility. Christ is the way.

The pope turned his eyes to the troubled parts of the world. He looked to the Holy City of Jerusalem, the city that witnessed Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection. He directed our thoughts to victims of so many conflicts such as the people of Israel, Palestine and Ukraine. He hoped for a general exchange of prisoners between Russia and Ukraine, for the release of Israeli hostages seized in October, for more humanitarian aid to Gaza and an immediate ceasefire.

Pope Francis spoke of the grave repercussions on civilians, especially the children; "So many children have forgotten how to smile," he said. He prayed that we would not allow the strengthening winds of war to blow across Europe and the Mediterranean. "Peace," he said, "is never mad with arms, but with outstretched hands and open hearts. He called on the world not to forget Syria, Lebanon, the Balkans, Haiti, the Rohingya and all the people of Myanmar, and he reminded his listeners of the plight of so many in Sudan and other parts of Africa.

God's love for us is amply reflected in the empty tomb, and nothing can separate us from Christ's love for us. Christ, he said, inspires us to resist injustice, to honour life, and to work for peace.

The pope concluded saying "May the light of the resurrection illumine our minds, convert our hearts and make us aware of the value of every human life, which must be welcomed, protected and loved. A Happy Easter to all!



## Like a Phoenix From the Ashes

**O**n 15 April 2019 the world watched as Notre Dame de Paris burned. After the spire collapsed and smoke appeared through the louvres of the west towers it seemed all but certain that one of the most iconic buildings of Christendom was doomed.

Throughout the world people watched television news, transfixed and horrified. On the banks of the Seine people chanted *Je vous salue Marie* as a song of farewell.

By the next morning the situation became somewhat clearer. The fire had caused immense damage, but the building was not beyond being salvaged. The roof was gone, and the building was drenched, but the main structure appeared to have been saved by the ancient stone vaulting of the ceilings.

It also became known that Monsieur L'Abbé Jean-Marc Fournier, the chaplain to the Paris Fire Brigade, had saved the precious relic of the Crown of Thorns. In addition, many of the cathedral's treasures had been safely removed and were taken to the Louvre, where they formed a splendid exhibition.

The world-wide interest motivated French company Histoverly, in collaboration with the Public Institution in charge of the conservation and restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris, to create an audio-visual presentation which toured many countries. The immersive and interactive experience called *Notre-Dame de Paris: The Augmented Exhibition* relives the cathedral's extraordinary saga, from its Middle Age builders to key historical events to restoration efforts to rebuild the monument since the 2019 fire.

The exhibition "*Notre Dame de Paris: The Augmented Edition*" is at Westminster Abbey until 1 June 2024. Booking of tickets is required.

Meanwhile, the restoration of Notre Dame has progressed at an extraordinary speed. Although President Macron's prediction that France would have the cathedral fully restored by the end of 2024 was greeted by considerable cynicism, it now appears that the remarkable feat will indeed be accomplished. It is planned to have the miraculously undamaged statue of Our Lady of Paris carried back to the cathedral in procession at the end of November, and a Mass of thanksgiving and rededication celebrated on 8th December.

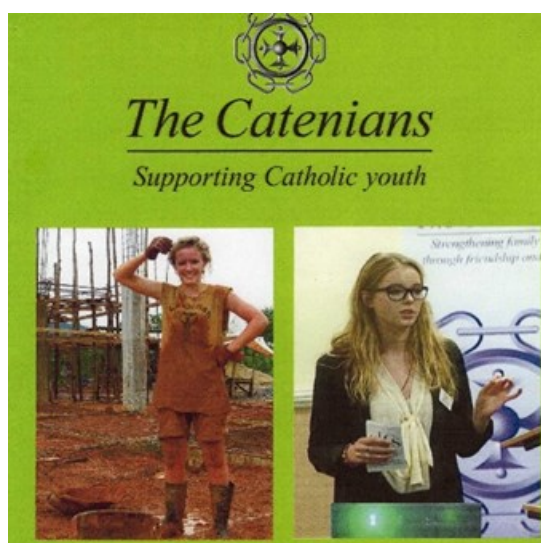


## Catenian Bursary Fund

**The Catenian Association invites all 18 to 25 year olds to do something wonderful!**

Are you thinking of volunteering, to do something to help others? Every year the Fund supports young Catholics from all over the world who volunteer to something wonderful and help those less fortunate than themselves. Financial support is available whether you are considering an individual project or volunteering with others, including planning to travel to Lourdes, going on the Jumbulance to help an assisted pilgrim, or intending to attend Flame.

The Catenian Association is a non-political lay organisation of Catholics founded to promote friendship and support, and to strengthen Catholic family life. The Bursary Fund was founded in 1980. It is a UK-registered charity with the aim of offering financial help to young people about to volunteer to help others. Last year the association gave £114,00 for projects in 53 countries.



For more details please contact [andover.catenians@gmail.com](mailto:andover.catenians@gmail.com)

*Peter Acres*

# World Day of Children

Following on from the success of World Youth Day, something which has been celebrated by the Catholic Church since its inception by Pope John Paul II in 1985, Pope Francis has announced that on 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> May this Year the Church is inaugurating a World Day of Children.

The initiative responds to the question, What kind of world do we want to leave to the children who are growing up now? "Like Jesus," said the pope, "we want to put children at the centre and care for them".

The event, which will see thousands of boys and girls from all over the world flock to Rome, is sponsored by the Dicastery for Culture and Education. The Dicastery had already offered its patronage in November, at the "Let's Learn from Boys and Girls" event that saw Pope Francis surrounded by some 7,500 children from around the world in the Paul VI Hall. A great meeting of music and testimony, the event can be seen as a prelude to 2024's World Day of Children.

The idea of a Day entirely dedicated to the youngest among us had been proposed to the Pope in July by a child, 9-year-old Alessandro, on the occasion of the Popecast, the second podcast made by Vatican Media with Pope Francis in view of the WYD in Lisbon.

"I like it very much!" the Pope replied after listening to the voice message. "We can have it organized by the grandparents. A beautiful idea. I will think about it and see how to do it."

Cardinal Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, said that this first Catholic World Day of Children will be on two levels – in Rome and universally in individual diocese. "An event like this," he said, "offers children the possibility to become protagonists through moments of prayer, friendship, and formation."

Cardinal Mendonça spoke about the "very significant coincidence" that the Day will take place during the Year of Prayer, stressing prayer and love for Jesus will be at the Day's heart.

"The transmission of the faith," he underscored, "is not done in a theoretical way but is done precisely by praying together," and he recalled Jesus' reminder that when two or three are gathered together in His name, He is present.

"This," Cardinal Mendonça reassured, "is what the children will experience next to the Holy Father," in an environment of conviviality, "where there will certainly be room for conviviality, for a more playful space."

"But the dominant elements will be prayer, adoration, and celebration of the faith, showing how children are not objects in the transmission of the faith, but are protagonists. Children believe in Jesus."



**PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PORTSMOUTH SEMINARIANS**  
APRIL 2024

 Rev. Tom Hiney - Diaconate Beda College, Rome	 Rev. Ambrose Chou - Year 6 St. Mary's, Oscott	 Owen Dugan - Year 2 St. Mary's, Oscott	 Francis Ezeani - Year 3 Allen Hall, London
 Jack Ryan - Year 4 Venerable English College, Rome	 Rev. Diego Hoyos Pastoral Year, Reading	 Ryan Browne - Year 5 Venerable English College, Rome	 Nathan King - Year 3 Allen Hall, London
 John Aburn - Propaedeutic Year Valladolid, Spain	 Farvin Gonsalves - Year 1 Allen Hall, London	 Ryan Hawkes - Year 4 Venerable English College, Rome	 Adam Trzebiński - Year 2 Allen Hall, London

See article on page 5 written by Seminarian, Owen Dugan.

# St. Catherine of Siena

Catherine was born in the Italian town of Siena in 1347, on the Feast of the Annunciation. She and her twin sister, who did not survive birth, were the youngest of twenty-five children born to Giacomo and Lapa Benincasa. Her father was a cloth dyer.

The young Catherine was a cheerful child, but also a devout one. It was said that going up or downstairs she would pause on each step and recite a Hail Mary.

Her parents had hopes that Catherine would serve the family well by making an advantageous marriage. Catherine resisted their plans, insisting that she was betrothed to Christ.

On Shrove Tuesday, 1366, she was praying in her room when she had a vision of Christ accompanied by His blessed Mother and a host of angels. Our Lady took Catherine's hand and held it up to her Son who placed a ring on her finger.

Despite her religious nature, Catherine did not choose to enter a convent. Instead, she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic, which allowed her to be part of the Order while living at home. Her fellow Dominicans taught her to read. She often visited hospitals and the homes of the poor and sick. She had an overly generous nature and, much to the irritation of her family, would give away the family's food and clothing to the needy. Through miraculous healings and her air of spiritual authority, Catherine began to attract disciples.

Catherine became involved in the politics of the Church at that time. The plague which ravaged Europe had led to the papacy moving from Rome to Avignon, leaving the day to day running of the Church to corrupt officials in Rome.

Catherine travelled widely trying to make peace between the states which supported the pope and those which opposed the corrupt rule of papal legates. She eventually went to see Pope Gregory, arriving in Avignon in June 1376. Though her intervention did nothing to quieten the rebellious states and bring peace, she did succeed in persuading Pope Gregory to leave Avignon and return to Rome.

Catherine did eventually establish peace between the Florentine faction and the papacy – but not during Pope Gregory's lifetime. Returning to Siena, Catherine dedicated herself to composing a book, which it is said she dictated under the influence of the Holy Ghost. This mystical work, written in four treatises, is known as the "Dialogue of St Catherine". Her writings were deemed to be so influential that she was later declared to be a Doctor of the Church.

Pope Gregory had been succeeded by the disastrous reign of Pope Urban VI; he proved to be so divisive that a rival pope was set up in Avignon by cardinals who declared Urban's election to have been illegal. Catherine remained loyal to Urban. She wrote letter after letter to princes, prelates, and leaders of many European nations. She also wrote scathing letters to Urban, admonishing him for his harshness which was turning even his supporters away from him. Rather than resenting her criticism, Urban invited her to Rome so that he might profit from her common sense and advice.

At the age of thirty-three, Catherine suffered a stroke which paralysed her, and eight days later she died. She was canonized in 1461, and she was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1970 by Pope Paul VI.



# Seminarian Owen Dugan

Owen is in his second year of a tailored program, at St Marys Seminary, Oscott, Birmingham. His home Parish is St Mary's, Gosport.

“He writes: Since a young age I have felt a call to priesthood, and I began to seriously discern my vocation around the age of 13 when I made my confirmation. One thing that struck and inspired me in particular at this early stage was the role the priest plays in reconciling souls to God through the Sacrament of Penance. As I continued to discern my vocation, I grew in ever greater love and admiration for the priest who stands at the altar, offering the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross on behalf of the Church, for the adoration of God and the sanctification of the Mystical Body of Christ.

This sense of deep admiration for the priesthood can often itself be a sign of a vocation, since it is the Holy Spirit who inspires such things in our hearts.

After an initial period of formation with the Diocese and then spending five years in a Franciscan community (spending time in Italy, England and the Philippines), I returned to the Diocese last year and came to St. Mary's College, Oscott where I am now continuing my formation for priesthood. As in any form of life, the seminary has its positives and negatives. It is a blessing to live in a house where there is a spirit of Christian fraternity amongst fellow seminarians and where there is a daily opportunity for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. It can at times be difficult feeling as if you are 'back at school', but one gets the sense that it is endured only for a time to arrive at a greater good.

My biggest thanks must go to Our Lady, who is always for us an infallible guide. When we give ourselves generously to Her, She truly comforts us in our afflictions, carries us in Her maternal arms and brings us to wherever She and Her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, desire us to be. Our Blessed Lady is the Mother of all vocations, and so I place mine under Her patronage, and would encourage anyone else discerning a priestly vocation to do the same.

May Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, under whose patronage we live here at Oscott, intercede for the Church and for each one of us, helping us to encounter the Risen Christ with hearts full of love and joy this Eastertide. Regina Caeli, Laetare! Alleluia!



---

## Submission to the Synod

Currently, the dioceses of England and Wales are each sending their submissions for the Synod to the CBCEW Secretariat in London. These submissions will be aggregated into one national submission to the Synod Secretariat in Rome and from the national submissions the Synod Secretariat will shape the *Lineamenta* (a document written in preparation for a General Assembly of the Synod) that will guide the Synod.

The diocese undertook consultations with some of the main clergy bodies and groups such as the Bishop's Council, the Council of Priests and the Deacons of the Diocese, as well as inviting submissions from the laity, from parishes and schools.. Under the guidance of Father John Chandler, the consultations focussed on three sections of the Synthesis Report from October 2023.

Part One focussed on Proposals M and K, which dealt with Christian Initiation and how can we better initiate children and adults into Christian discipleship. This covered such topics as how to improve the quality of liturgy and sacramental rites so that every encounter with the Church is meaningful and attractive. The place of music, and technology, to speak to the modern mind, and how we can make engagement easier for visitors and non-Catholics, ways to bring Catholics together for prayer, formation and fellowship, as well as encouraging the praying of the Divine Office and establishing Marian shrines in church grounds. (Ctd on page 6)

# Deliver Us From Evil

The Catholic Truth Society (CTS) has published a new booklet by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales offering a treasury of prayers drawn from Holy Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

*Deliver Us From Evil* does not provide a formula of words to be prayed over others; it is a set of useful prayers and supplications, humble requests for the Lord's help, that can be used by Catholics in times of fear, distress or temptation. The booklet includes prayers of protection, prayers of thanksgiving, and prayers of faith and confidence.

Fr. Robert Taylerson, a member of the Spirituality Committee for the Bishops' Conference and Spiritual Director at Oscott College, explains that while it is important to acknowledge the forces of evil in the world, Catholics must also maintain a sense of hope.

"We are not centrally a people who are overawed by evil. We are centrally a eucharistic people of thanksgiving," says Fr. Taylerson.

"The evil which we see, which distresses us and causes us lament, prompts us to renew our efforts and our journey of prayer."

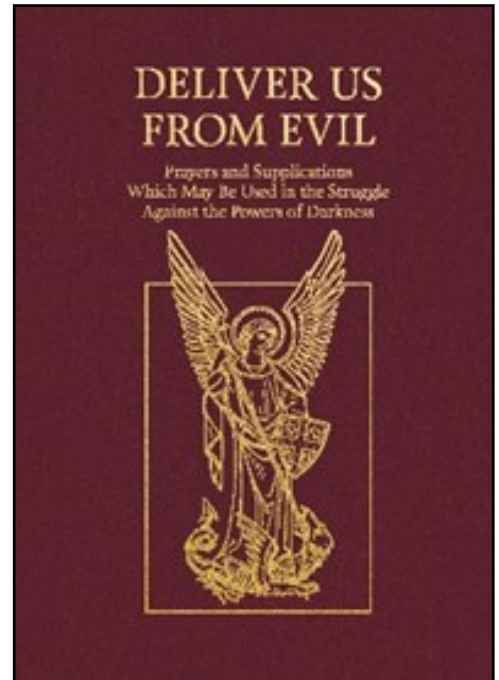
Fr. Taylerson explains, evil must be viewed in the light of Christ's death and resurrection so it is not overwhelming: "The sense of thanksgiving is great and necessary to put the whole thing in context because we see the continued presence of evil in the light of the power of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, which we celebrate as the source and summit of our Christian life in the Masses we celebrate."

He goes on to say that prayer is something that always leads to an increase in faith. "Prayer of its essence always renews hope," he says. "The ideal prayer is also to have one's heart in union with the heart of Christ. And that's something that both unites God's people as the body of Christ and enables the full power of God's spirit to work through us, who are the body of Christ, and to see it all as a great privilege."

Father Taylerson also describes how we can understand the presence of evil in the world as the denial of good: "One of the good ways to approach the presence of evil is to understand it as the corruption of something that is good. That's most easily seen in things like virtue.

"And if one goes back to the ancient Greek philosophers, they would see moral virtues as being somewhere between two vices.

"So, if you're talking about the virtue of courage, you would see if you go too far one direction, you get to recklessness, and if you go too far in another direction, you get to cowardice."



---

*(Submission to the Synod—ctd from page 5)* Part Two focussed on Proposals N and Q, dealing with the Church as Mission, and how our Diocese can become more missionary. Building on what was started with "Called and Gifted" by using the gifts identified as being given to us by the Holy Spirit in our parishes. The merging of parishes could provide an opportunity to revisit the charisms and to provide and encourage their development, and provide opportunities for discussion of the charisms. Churches need to be open during daylight hours for prayer.

Part Three focussed on proposals K and L, a Synodal approach to Formation, and how we might form people more effectively in the Gospel and the Church's teaching. To do this we need to form the heart, mind, and soul of every believer and see formation as the key to "converting Catholics". Establish a team to produce uniform catechetical material to be used across the Diocese and to provide high-quality programmes for lay catechists to be trained, qualified and mandated by the bishop to deliver. To devise high-quality catechetical material that could be used in parishes and schools, and to enhance the relationship between parish and school. Aim to ensure that everyone in the diocese receives appropriate, authentic, professional and meaningful formation, and to ensure that the Six Holy Habits are adopted by all the laity and clergy.

# The Pope's Intentions



## The Pope's Intention for April

Every year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. You are invited to answer the Holy Father's request and to join with many people worldwide in praying for this intention each month. From time to time, the Holy Father may add a second prayer intention related to current events or urgent needs, like disaster relief. The second prayer request will help mobilize prayer and action related to the urgent situation. The Pope's monthly prayer intentions alternate between prayers for Evangelization and prayers for a Universal theme.

This month of April he asks us to remember the role of women: We pray that the dignity and immense value of women be recognised in every culture, and for the end of discrimination that they experience in different parts of the world.

---

## Reflection on the April Prayer Intention

I have a friend named Lyn who's old enough to be my mom. Lyn and I talk often about women's roles in the Church. Interestingly, Lyn was my paediatrician when I was a child. She opened doors for my generation in countless ways, fighting for equality and respect in education, at home and in the workplace. I'm grateful for Lyn's sacrifice, even though I've found the best manner for me to live out my own feminine is as a stay-at-home mom who writes a little on the side. Lyn and I have different views on many issues. Here's a snippet of our most recent conversation:

**Lyn:** "The Church needs to encourage more active participation by women, including the role of female priests -- Jesus appeared to women *first* after the resurrection."

**Sarah:** "But Jesus chose twelve *male* apostles to lead his Church. He could have just as easily chosen female apostles. His relationships with His Mother and other women direct us to a profound calling all its own."

Lyn and I have had this conversation many times. Ours is always a pleasant exchange, because our mutual love for Jesus and one another binds us closer than any philosophical differences we may have. I imagine a gal from the next generation -- one of my daughters-in-law, perhaps, (since I only have sons) will join us at the kitchen table one day. I imagine this younger woman will add her unique life experience and voice to the discussion in a meaningful way.

Because the issue of women's roles in society and the Church is incredibly complex, it's one that's still unfolding. For this reason, there's so much we've yet to figure out and why all of us -- conservative, liberal and moderate -- need to keep the conversation going.

*This Reflection is by Sarah Robsdottir. She is a Catholic convert and a homeschooling mom to seven sons. Her debut novel "Brave Water" was published last year by Voyage Publishing.*

---

## Healing Prayers Group



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

If you would like to choose a theme, **scripture reading and music, or would like a copy of the El Shaddai Healing Prayer** or if you would like any further information, please contact the parish office.



# From the School

The upper school welcomed Father Austin and Father Benjamin into school before the end of term to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The children led the celebration with hymns, scripture readings, reflections, and prayers to help make an examination of conscience before confession.

Prior to receiving their First Confession in church on March 9<sup>th</sup>, the First Communicants in Years 3 and 5 had met with Mrs Whatley to pray and prepare to ask God's help to make a good confession, the next milestone in their spiritual life.

Key Stage 2 took their turn leading the Stations of the Cross in the parish church during Lent. They did this with quiet reverence, and were joined by many parishioners, parents and friends.

For some time, pupils have been in the local area taking part in the Big Lent Walk to raise money for CAFOD. The classes have been completing walks of various distances appropriate to their age. Some have been very local – Year R walked to the Post Office on Floral Way to post a letter, while Years 3 & 4 walked to Ashbourne Court care home with gifts of flowers for the residents. In return the children (and staff!) were given treats. Years 5 & 6 completed an interactive walk in the local area and, while clocking up the kilometres, used their observational skills to fill in question sheets detailing the number of lampposts and fire hydrants, and completing mathematical calculations. Throughout the walk, Mr Downing collected litter to illustrate how much rubbish thoughtless people left behind them.

At the time of writing, St John the Baptist school community had raised £669 (the target was £500!) and the distance walked and logged online was 978 kilometres, far exceeding the target of 400 kilometres. A great result so far. Every step and every penny will support CAFOD in their wonderful work around the world.

Recently, Bailey (the school's friend and therapy dog) had his first assessment with one of the trainers from PAW's therapy programme. The trainer spent an hour watching him demonstrate what he had learned so far – walking calmly along corridors, settling on his mat or bed, and basic obedience as well as some tricks. Bailey got full marks! He has now been permitted to begin working with children, with individuals or small groups, for very short periods while he continues to learn his therapy role.

February was Heart Awareness Month. The school now has an Automated External Defibrillator on site, located in the school office. Over the next few weeks, staff will be trained how to use it in an emergency.

The police visited Year R and the children enjoyed learning about the different duties of a police officer. They had the opportunity to ask many questions, to examine a police car and use its blue lights, and to try on the protective pieces of uniform.

Year 4 welcomed a special visitor in the form of a maker of Viking boats. Astrid answered questions such as what made Viking longships so successful, how they were constructed, and how to identify different parts of the boats. Going out to the playground, they measured out the length and width of the boat to see how very big they were. To complete the exercise, they "boarded" the boat and Mrs Nash beat a drum so they could practice rowing in time. It was harder than they had imagined!

The school had a very enjoyable "Book Week". The theme this year was "Books about Friendship". The children took part in competitions, discussed the importance of reading, and invited parents and grandparents in to school as surprise guest readers to share their favourite books. They welcomed author Simon Chadwick, and each class took part in an illustration workshop with him. The week ended with an optional "dress-up day" when the children came to school dressed as a character from a book about friendship. The week ended with a very successful Book Fair with many children going home with new books to enjoy and treasure.





# Andover Chamber Choir

The Andover Chamber Choir will return to St. Mary's Church, Andover on 13 April at 7.30 pm for its first concert of 2024.

Musical Director, Andrew Wyndham said, "We will be singing Faure's beautiful and ever popular Requiem. Completed in 1890, Faure's setting has been a favourite with choirs and audiences ever since."

The first half of the concert is a 'Patchwork Mass' which will be made up of contrasting settings from different composers including Byrd, Palestrina and Bruckner.

Proceeds from this event will be going to the Andover charity 'Finding Freedom from Abuse' a charity committed to supporting women, men, children and young people who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Tickets at £10 (in advance) include interval refreshments and are available from The Lights, Andover (online and in person), Newbury Building Society, Andover and choir members. They will be £12 at the door. Under-16s will be admitted free.

For further information, please contact: Veronica Bacon 01264 771285 [www.andoverchamberchoir.org.uk](http://www.andoverchamberchoir.org.uk)



## Closer to Christ Campaign

Bishop Philip has been delighted by the support being given to the Closer to Christ Campaign. The campaign was started to address significant needs in parishes and ministry. It aims to sustain and rekindle the diocesan faith community by supporting our priests from formation and into retirement and ensuring parishes have the necessary resources to thrive in the future. The bishop has said: "Thanks to the Lord, the leadership of our priests in over 60 parishes and the extraordinary generosity of approaching 3,500 families, I am so pleased to share that we have now secured in excess of £11 million in pledges. I find this incredible and truly remarkable, and it speaks to the genuine commitment to the future of our Catholic faith across our Diocese."



"I am humbled and encouraged by this wonderful success and so grateful to each one of you. This is a very special moment for me and I am sure for all of you as we move forward as a Diocesan family."

"The tremendous kindness and participation you have shown are a true blessing and I am confident that this achievement ensures that our Diocese can continue our mission of bringing people

## Wisdom Centre Romsey

The programme of events for Spring into Summer at Wisdom House in Romsey will include:

**Myriam of Nazareth: Icon of Wisdom** – Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April Facilitated by Sister Marie Turner

**Kindfulness: A Day on the Importance of Self-Compassion** – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May Facilitated by David Cole.

**A Day of Wellbeing: Mindfulness, Yoga, Sacred Sound, Meditation, Creativity** – Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June Facilitated by Carolyn, Fran, Helen, Lou, and Yasmin.

**Returning to Centre: Mysticism of the East and the Spirituality of the West** – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July Facilitated by David Cole.

The weekly in-person meditation sessions are every Wednesday evening from 7.30 to 8.30. These evenings are free of charge and there is no need to pre-book. If you would like to know more about the meditation groups or wish to be added to the weekly meditation mailing list please contact the reception at Wisdom House.

The Labyrinth, Rose Patio, and Centenary Garden are freely available at any time for rest and reflection. Please look at the Wisdom Centre website for the full programme of events. To book or for enquiries you can email: [reception@wisdomhouseromsey.co.uk](mailto:reception@wisdomhouseromsey.co.uk) or phone 01794 830206.

*The Wisdom Centre team of Fiona, Jackie, Fran, Pat, Jade Sr. Marie and Sr Jackie*

## The Creator (2023)

This is a Science Fiction film that pierces to the heart of the Easter narrative. Pun intended. It's also extremely well-watchable and can be viewed from being a plain shoot'em up, through a personal redemption narrative, to; was Mary Shelley actually on the right track with *Frankenstein*?

Set about 40 years in the future, the world has totally embraced Artificial Intelligence (AI). Literally; there are AI engendered robots doing human tasks and performing human roles in society. For instance, there are AI police officers that do the job of a regular police officer, have arms, legs and a head but clearly resemble the robots from *Star Wars*.



So, all good and a brave and better world it seems. Yes - until a nuclear bomb goes off in Los Angeles and vaporises 1 million people. The world now divides between West and East. The East keeps on with AI robots and they become fully integrated into Asian society. They work in the rice fields, they become Buddhist monks, the whole shebang. The West decides otherwise. For the West, it's now "Them or Us" (AI robots or Humankind) and act accordingly. Top of the West's target list is the semi-mythical "Creator" of the intelligence that makes the AI robots seemingly as sentient and emotionally human as flesh and blood humans. Kill that person and so cut off the AI hydra's head. Job done.

To this end, an ex-Special Forces soldier (emotionally damaged of course) is made part of the Team to infiltrate the base in the East where the Creator is believed to be. Long story short, the mission goes not entirely to plan, and the soldier is on the run with a child that is the offspring of the AI Creator. They are chased by the East's Security Forces and own Team survivors that reckon our boy has turned traitor. Not so; he's just turned the corner into recovering his humanity.

From then on, all the plugs get pulled out for all the action (and very well done as well) you'd want for a purely action film. You will not be bored, and it does move the story on at pace. At the end part of the film, our redeemed sinner, now fully on the side of the Angels, destroys the West's super weapon, NOMAD ( i.e. the *Death Star*). He dies but saves the East from obliteration. The film ends with the child on the ground and safe with the clear implication that they will be the new Teacher for all peoples in the future.

At the centre of this film lurks the claim that human beings can create life that is both as intelligent and as moral as any flesh and blood human being. Indeed, from examples shown in the film, it's the physical human beings that are the nasty ones and who are cruel, murderous and so on. You don't see an AI robot doing a nasty thing. And from that comes the implication they are the meek that will inherit the Earth. Wrong. I'd trust the Gospels on this one and not a Science Fiction film, however good.

John Newland

---

## The Permanent Diaconate

Fr. Dominic Adeiza, Director of Diaconate asks, are YOU being called to the Permanent Diaconate?

Have you ever wondered what it's all about but something has held you back from finding out more about it? Is there a little voice in your head, that can't be silenced? If that's YOU, why not 'Come & See' for yourself without committing to anything further.

We'll be holding an information event on **Saturday, 11th May, 2024** at The English Martyrs Church, Didcot from 9am – 3pm where you'll get to hear first hand, from those who are involved and what it's been like for them. You've got nothing to lose!

If you'd like to attend, please call Pam on 07883 059529 to book a space and to help with catering requirements.

If you can't make it on the day, but would like to know more, please contact Pam or email [diaconate@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:diaconate@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk).



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

Cathy O'Shea and Joseph Burdett.

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

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

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

Esme Coveney, Rita Lane, Tom Wilkins, Margaret Williams, Patrick Arnold, Sheila Muir, Sheila Roberts, Mary Hathaway, Christopher Brown, Lisa Ramage, Mervyn Owen, Michelle Taylor, Bernard Ivinson, Fiona Hilleard, Carol Keenan, Mary Oak, Tony Fabian, Sile Monnelly, Helen O'Connell, Ben and Frances Dunne, Robert Williams, Simon and Victoria Rowney, Douglas Manning, Guy Foa, Diane Mahoney, Diane Gan, Debbie Smythe, Wendy Rawlings, and all those in need of our prayers.

*If you know that anyone on this list is now happily recovered, or if you would like a name added to this list, please contact the editors.*

**PLEASE NOTE**

**A**rticles printed in *The JOURNAL* are printed in good faith and are not necessarily the views of the editors. Contributions must be accompanied by full name and address, which may be withheld on request. The editors reserve the right to amend all contributions. Please support our advertisers, they support us.

**ENDPIECE**

**M**any thanks to the various contributors to this month's *The JOURNAL*. The next edition will be issued on 4th & 5th May. Contributions should be with the editors by Monday 30th April. Please leave contributions at the Presbytery or email them to: [stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com](mailto:stjohnsjournal@googlemail.com)