

Wishing a Joyful Christmas and Happy New Year to All



Paul Naughton makes a Christmas appeal dressed in Santa hat and the obligatory shorts, for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Bishops say 'no' to ordination of married priests

by Andrew Smith

THE Bishops of England and Wales have ruled out the prospect of admitting married men to the priesthood.

A motion to the Plenary Assembly of the Bishops' Conference in Leeds for the ordination of mature married men, tabled by Bishop Seamus Cunningham of Hexham and Newcastle, was not supported.

During the November meeting of the Hexham & Newcastle Council of Priests, the priests of the diocese requested that the issue of accepting married men into the priesthood might be discussed at the meeting of the Bishops' Conference, which took place in Leeds from November 16 to 19.

Bishop Seamus agreed to their request to raise the matter.

Reporting back to the diocese, Bishop Seamus said: "Arguments have been put forward that with

the declining numbers of priests, ordaining married men who are proven in their Christian life, would allow the faithful not to be starved from the sacraments, especially the Eucharist."

During what the Bishop described as a "very calm and thoughtful" discussion, many bishops noted that the tradition of the Church for over 1,000 years was that the priesthood and celibacy, as a sign and symbol of an interior dedication to Christ and his kingdom, are intimately linked.

"Any separation of them as a norm of the Church would change the nature of how we see the priesthood," Bishop Seamus reported.

He added: "Acknowledgement was made of those married priests who serve in our parishes at the

moment, especially the former Anglican clergy who have converted to the Catholic Church over the past 20 years and those who are members of the Ordinatee.

"At the heart of the priesthood is sacrifice; the sacrifice of the Mass where Christ gives himself for the salvation of the world, and the sacrifice of the priest who offers his life for his people.

"In the context of this wide-ranging discussion, the Bishops maintained the traditional teaching of the Church for a celibate priesthood."

In response to brief questions, Bishop Seamus said that the decision was based upon a general consensus. He said he felt that the discussion reflected priests and bishops "listening to each other and searching their hearts".



The moment of a lifetime for little Nya Mary Binu, of Fenham, when Pope Francis gave her a personal blessing. Story in full, Page 3.

Christmas deadlines

THE Northern Cross office will be closed from Monday, December 21, until Friday, January 1 inclusive.

The January issue of the Cross will be published on the weekend of January 9 and 10.

To allow for staff, publishing and commercial business breaks over the Christmas period, please note that the deadline for the booking of advertise-

ments for the January issue of the Cross is Thursday, December 17.

Editorial contributors are also asked to supply text and pictures for the January issue by Tuesday, December 22, if possible. The final deadline is Thursday, December 31.

May we wish all readers, contributors, advertisers, deliverers and volunteers a very merry Christmas and a happy New year.

Head dons shorts for a year

THE inspiring headteacher of the region's top-performing Catholic primary school has accepted a challenge to wear shorts for a year in aid of charity.

Paul Naughton, Headteacher at Sacred Heart Primary School, Byermoor, began the challenge in July and aims to carry out on throughout the winter months to boost funds for Macmillan Cancer Support, writes Andrew Smith.

Paul said: "The first few months were a breeze although it was a rather washed out summer. However, from November it has gradually started to get a little tough at times in the morning at the school gate and during break and

EXCLUSIVE

lunchtime duties. Working at Sacred Heart can be a little draughty at the best of times."

The challenge was set by an elderly parishioner during a wet day in July and Paul aims to see it through to completion on July 22 next year, the last day of the summer term. The entire school community and many others are supporting Paul in his quest.

"My staff, governors and academy directors are very supportive of the challenge," said Paul, "although I had to explain to Ofsted why I was wearing shorts recently during an inspection but it didn't prevent

them awarding Sacred Heart 'outstanding' in every area.

"I also have to explain myself to new prospective parents and visitors who often think I'm a bit odd.

"Also, Bishop Seamus asked why I was wearing shorts at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle, during a Mass for new headteachers, but he thought it was a worthy challenge."

"Attending a football match at St James's Park in November was one of those places I found tough, with everyone so well wrapped up apart from the players and me, shivering away with my large Bovril.

"More recently, I have had staff dinners and a presentation evening at the

local golf club, which was black tie. I did the bow tie but, embarrassingly, I had to wear the shorts too. It all went down well - I was just told not to attend next year!

"I have no place to hide and my three children won't even let me wear my pyjamas in bed, so its shorts 24/7 when I shop, go to meetings, collect the post, milk, pop out for meals, the golf club, kids football matches and go to church.

"Fortunately, I've had no funerals to attend this year but I will cross that bridge if it comes."

Paul, who has completed several testing endurance challenges in the past, said that people who know him understand his reasoning

for supporting Macmillan.

"Life is precious and must be lived out to the full if possible," he said. "That has always been my life philosophy. I never waste a day or a minute if I don't think I have to. Personal challenges keep me going and help me to help others.

"One charity that really makes a difference and has the most remarkable nurses is Macmillan Cancer Support. If you can support me, then please either pop your pennies in the box at the school entrance or donate online.

● To donate to Paul in his challenge for Macmillan Cancer Support go to: www.justgiving.com/Paul-Naughton3

MEDJUGORJE PILGRIMAGES 2016



Sunday 22nd May to Sunday 29th May 2016

If booked before the end of February will have £30 Discount

Departing from Newcastle £539

For further details, please contact Marie Bedingfield on 01642 530739



Northern Cross CHRISTMAS NOTICEBOARD

TONY AND MARGARET MENDEZ

would like to wish all Northern Cross readers a very happy and holy Christmas.

FELLING IRISH ASSOCIATION

wish all their members and friends, a very happy Christmas and all good wishes for the New Year.

MIKE & BERNIE MORRISSEY, 'SUNNY' SALTBURN-BY-SEA

Greetings and every blessing to all in the Hexham & Newcastle Diocese. From NX readers on the southern extremity of the Diocese.

MAUREEN AND JOHN BAILEY

Christmas blessings to all our pals love from Maureen & John Bailey

LYNN & HCPT GROUP 527

*send love and prayers for Christmas
Big thanks to everyone for making our 20th anniversary year a real hit.
And don't forget: 2016 is HCPT's diamond jubilee!*

THE PARISH COMMUNITY OF ST WILLIAM'S IN DARLINGTON

wish everyone a most Happy, Holy, and Peaceful Christmas. and we welcome you to our Colourful Carol Service on Sunday 20th December 4pm Our Christmas Day Mass is at 9am

BERNADETTE AND DAVID LAWSON

wish all their friends a very Happy Christmas and every blessing in the New Year

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

St Cecilia's Section, Sunderland, thank all those who have supported the Section throughout the year and wish everyone a very happy Christmas

THE NEW SVP CONFERENCE THE HOLY FAMILY PARISH HARTLEPOOL

*wish a Happy and Holy Christmas
TURNING CONCERN INTO ACTION
+ This is the Church Year of Mercy
- why not join SVP?
+ First contact: Hartlepool
01429-268680*

THE CHAIRMAN & OFFICERS OF THE NORTH EAST BRANCH OF THE

Catholic Writers' Guild of St Francis de Sales
wish all members & friends a very Happy Christmas... and we hope to welcome many new members in the New Year

NE-MMaC THE MOVEMENT FOR MARRIED CLERGY IN THE NORTH-EAST*

*The time for change has come!
We wish all Northern Cross readers a Happy and Peaceful Christmas
*Want to support us? Or just learn more about the change we seek?
Visit our website - www.marriedclergy.co.uk - or email mkerrigan12@yahoo.com*

ANNE, DAVE AND LEE WICKHAM

Happy and Holy Christmas to Bernadette and David Lawson, John and Maureen Bailey, Andrew, Maggie, Claire, Kathleen and all others who support and help the Northern Cross

Church to stop 'general absolution'

MAKING confession though services of "general absolution" is to end across the dioceses of England and Wales.

A Bishops' Conference held in Leeds in November ruled that it "does not approve the use of Rite III celebrations, commonly called 'general absolution'".

Bishop Seamus Cunningham reported back to the Hexham & Newcastle Council of Laity, saying: "This encounter, whether it is through an individual confession in the traditional manner, or through individual confession as part of a Penitential Service, is key to experiencing the love of Christ."

It was for this reason, the Bishop said, that the decision had gone against services of general absolution.

He said: "The Catholic Church believes the Sacrament of Reconciliation, commonly known as 'confession', is central in the process of conversion.

"Within the celebration of this beautiful sacrament, the person is able to 'touch the grandeur of God's

by Andrew Smith

mercy' so that the experience becomes 'a source of inner peace'."

Bishop Seamus explained: "Jesus calls all to repent and believe in the Good News, and so experience this mercy as a gift of the Father to those he has created in love."

"This process of conversion is at the heart of the Christian life."

He said the Bishops' Conference had noted the opportunities afforded by the coming Year of Mercy, promulgated by Pope Francis, to invite all people to 'experience the rich mercy of the Father'.

"Each diocese will be placing, the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the heart of the Year," he said.

"There will be many opportunities in churches up and down the country to experience the forgiveness of the Father. The Bishops' Conference has affirmed the importance of the personal encounter between the penitent and Christ, present in the person of the priest confessor."



□ Pope Francis blesses Niya at the Vatican during his general audience in Rome.

Pope gives personal blessing to Niya

Report by
Alison Rebello

A GENERAL audience with the Pope turned into a once-in-a-lifetime moment for five-year-old Niya Mary Binu of Fenham - when the Holy Father gave her a personal blessing.

Niya, of Sacred Heart Primary School, Fenham, visited Italy with her family during the half-term holiday in October, five days before her fifth birthday

On October 28 they arrived in

Rome with the hope of seeing Pope Francis, and set off at 4.30am to get a good position for the general audience in St Peter's Square.

When the Popemobile passed the spot where they had been standing for several hours, Pope Francis pointed to one of the security guards to pick Niya for a blessing.

The family was awestruck when Pope Francis made a sign of the cross on Niya's forehead.

They could not capture this precious moment on their own camera or mobile phone they later rushed

to the Papal office where they managed to get a few pictures of the very special occasion.

Niya's dad Binu Skriah said: "Like every pilgrim to Rome, we went with the hope of seeing Pope Francis from close quarters and to click a few pictures of him when he passed by in his Popemobile. But we didn't expect Pope Francis to bless our daughter personally. We are thankful to God that our daughter was blessed by the Vicar of Christ. What more could we ask for from a trip to Rome?"

Niya said with excitement: "It was nice to see Pope Francis and being blessed by him."

"I have a picture of Pope Francis at home and now I can say to everyone that I have been personally blessed by him."

Niya Mary attends the reception class at Sacred Heart where her elder brother Andreas Binu studies in Year 3.

Dad Binu runs a group of convenience stores in Gateshead and mother Sini Binu works as a staff nurse in RVI, Newcastle.



□ Niya Mary Binu with brother Andreas Binu.



ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL Newcastle upon Tyne

www.stmaryscathedral.org.uk

(0191) 232 6953 office@stmaryscathedral.org.uk

Usual Service Times at the Cathedral

Sunday

Holy Mass is celebrated at:

8.00am ☐ spoken

10.00am ☐ cantor and organ, with children's Liturgy of the Word on the first Sunday of the month (during school term)

11.30am ☐ Solemn Mass with the Cathedral choir (for Music Lists see under ☐Music☐ on the Cathedral website or visit <http://music.stmaryscathedral.org.uk/#/blog>)

6.30pm ☐ music group

Monday☐Friday

Holy Mass is celebrated at **8.00am** and **12.05pm**

(On certain Holydays there is additionally a 5.30pm Mass; on Solemnities and certain Feasts which fall during the week, the 12.05 Mass is often sung. Please check the website.)

Saturday Holy Mass is celebrated at **10.00am**

Public Holidays Holy Mass is celebrated at **12.05pm** only

Confessions (Sacrament of Penance)

Wednesday and Friday **after the 8.00am Mass**

Tuesday and Thursday at **5.00pm**

Saturday at **10.30☐11.30am**

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Monday-Friday **11.00☐11.55am**

(with Benediction at 11.55; Rosary on Fridays at 11.30am)

Cathedral Opening Hours

Cathedral Office telephone 0191 232 6953 ext 201

e-mail office@stmaryscathedral.org.uk Mon-Fri 9.30am-4.00pm

Pauline Books and Media telephone 0191 231 6040 Tues-Sat 10.00am-4.30pm and the first Sunday of the month 9.30am-1.15pm

Cloister Caf☐ and Restaurant telephone 0191 232 8761 Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.00pm, Sat 9.00 am-4.30 pm and Sun 9.00am-2.00pm

Cathedral Diary

Wednesday 2 December The Source, a gathering of Young People from across the Diocese. It is for all those in Year 9+ The event starts at 7.00pm and finishes at 8.30pm. There is a time of Praise and Worship, input by a guest speaker and socialising in the Cloister Caf☐ afterwards.

Monday 7, 14, 21 December Opening the door of mercy - afternoons of recollection for Advent 1.30 - 3.00pm in Cathedral House. All welcome!

Wednesday 9 December 'Illuminate' - an Advent Liturgy by the Hexham and Newcastle Catholic Schools Partnership. 6-7.00pm in the Cathedral. All are most welcome to attend.

Friday 11 December Christmas Sparkle in the Cloister Caf☐ - Back by popular demand! An evening of Christmas Cheer, gift ideas and entertainment. Tickets are £10 which includes a Christmas Carvery served with wine. (tickets available from the caf☐)

Saturday 12 December Carol singing with the Missionaries of Charity on Northumberland Street (by M&S and Primark). Carols start at 3.00pm. All are Welcome to join them.

Thursday 17 December Carols by Candlelight (with Brunswick Methodist Church and the Salvation Army band), 7.30pm. All are welcome.

Saturday 19 December Advent Penitential Service, with the opportunity for individual confession, 12 noon. All are welcome.

Thursday 24 Christmas Eve First Mass of the Nativity at 8.00pm (Principal Celebrant: Bishop Séamus ☐solemn sung Mass with the Cathedral choir)

Friday 25 December Christmas Day Masses at 8.00am (with carols) and at 10.00am (International Mass, with the Cathedral choir: readings and prayers in several languages)



Year of Mercy

8 December 2015- 20 November 2016

On Tuesday 8 December, Bishop Séamus will launch the Year of Mercy in our Diocese

7.15 am

Mass with Bishop Séamus

10.30 - 11.15am

Talk by Bishop Séamus

11.15 - 11.45am

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

12.05pm

Concelebrated Mass with Bishop Séamus and Diocesan Clergy

There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the day and Priests available to hear Confession between 8am and 8pm (except during talk and Mass)

On Sunday 13 December 2015 Bishop Séamus will open the Holy Door at 3.00pm in the Cathedral.
All are welcome

Inspiring risk-taker banks on belief in people



□ Jonathan Ruffer, open to God and adventure.

YOU MAY have seen the advertisement - KYNREN, An Epic Tale of England. It was broadcast sometime after X Factor recently.

This was an early drumbeat for a huge, dramatic, outdoor storytelling of our history, involving 1,000 trained volunteers. It happens in Bishop Auckland and starts in July.

Big things are happening here in the seat of the Prince Bishops. But I want to tell you about the man behind them and what's behind him.

Jonathan Ruffer, a 64-year-old investment banker hit the headlines in the North East when he put up millions to save a series of religious paintings in Auckland Castle by Spanish maestro Francisco de Zurbaran. Why? Because he believes in people.

So what's the connection? He's gone on since to take over the

by Fr Dennis Tindall

castle, the former home of the bishops of Durham, to set up Auckland Castle Trust and develop a range of projects restoring the heritage back to local people.

Jonathan is a community builder, a philanthropist who wishes to spend the later years of his working life helping others to believe in themselves and to develop the latent seam of great talent that we all know sits here within the region.

Hang on, you might be already wondering, what's afoot here? What's the real reason why he's doing this? What's in it for him?

He lives his life as his best expression of what he believes God is asking of him. He has a sense of obedience to the Lord that I find humbling and quite remarkable. He prays from 5am to

6.30am each morning, drawn ever deeper into the riches of 11 Anglican collect prayers. It sets his compass for the day.

He feels simply called to use whatever resources he has and can raise in order to encourage and build community. He's about people. Buildings help, but they're not his main focus.

Here you meet a man with a youthful smile, a disarming sense of humour and an openness to God and to possibility. It comes out as an adventure, a heady mix of courage and fear, handled with a beguiling and strong innate trust in Providence. His work in investments makes him no stranger to risk, but to do nothing means that nothing happens. And Jonathan Ruffer is a doer.

He has gathered a passionate team around him, carefully engaging others including, among a range of projects, 1,000 volun-

teers to make happen a storytelling spectacle costing an eye-watering amount of money. But it's important - it's the story of us. You've seen nothing like it since the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics.

Our area has been the birthplace of so much invention. Our narrative of hard graft, skill and grime has given much to the world.

But the glory days are past, and despite politicians' rhetoric, poor prospects, scepticism and even cynicism contribute to a diminishing self-image that many find is affecting our communities.

Here, the Auckland Castle Trust and the Eleven Arches Trust, which is producing KYNREN, have a vision to put pride back into local people and to warm the waiting talents of the area.

Training and volunteering opportunities, apprenticeships and jobs are emerging from a series of

enterprises under Jonathan's inspiration. The development and renovations at the castle and a new extension, housing a large Museum of Faith, will sit alongside a new welcome building, a restoring of the 17th century walled garden, remodelling of a Market Place hotel for visitors and a new Institute of Spanish Art and Culture together with refurbishment of other buildings to draw in people who once made the town a bustling centre of interest.

The KYNREN experience is one not to be missed. Check its website (Kynren.co.uk) and that of Auckland Castle (aucklandcastle.org) for information. And bear in mind, as we look Forward Together in Hope, that consistent and open prayer can lead us into possibilities we may yet be unable to foresee. Jonathan Ruffer is an example.

Parishes share silver celebration

by Bernadette Lawson

CONGRATULATIONS to Fr David Russell, who marked the silver jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood last month.

Fr David, parish priest of the two parishes of Holy Family, Cockerton and St Thomas Aquinas, both in Darlington, enjoyed a week of celebrations based around his jubilee date, November 17.

He celebrated a Mass in his home parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Horden, where he was ordained 25 years ago. Parishioners joined him afterwards to celebrate and enjoyed a cake baked and decorated by Fr David's mother, Linda.

Later in the week, children from all the Catholic primary schools in Darlington gathered for a wonderful Mass.

Finally, many of his priest friends and his present and former parishioners joined him for a Mass of



□ Fr David Russell cuts the cake baked by his mother, Linda.

Thanksgiving, followed by a social in the parish centre.

Fr David's jubilee is the last one of what has been a bumper year for priestly jubilees in the diocese.

Fr Michael Keoghan, Fr Henry Ryan, Fr Ronald Richmond and Canon Frank Kearney all marked 60 years of priesthood.

Fr Jack Taggart and Fr Michael Melia, died just before their jubilee date.

There were four golden jubilees - Fr Kevin Cummins, Fr Harry O'Reilly, Fr Joseph Park and Fr Sydney Riley.

Fr Michael Campion marked his ruby jubilee in June.

The silver jubilarians were Fr Michael Humble, Fr Nick Jennings, Fr Paul McCourt, Fr Peter Stott and Fr Russell.

'Content' Canon marks 60 years as a priest

by Andrew Jackson

CANON Frank Kearney celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination on November 27 with a Jubilee Mass held in the Chapel of St Joseph's Home, Newcastle where he now resides.

Canon, as he is called by his former parishioners, retired from active parish ministry in 2011.

Fr Martin Stempczyk was the Principle Celebrant and 10 of the Canon's brother priests concelebrated with him. Canon Alec Barrass gave the homily.

The congregation included members of the Canon's family, friends from his previous parishes, in particular his final parish of St Agnes, Crawcrook, other residents of St Joseph's Home and the Little Sisters of the Poor, who provide him with such loving care.

At the end of the Mass a formal presentation of a Papal Blessing and a Spiritual Bouquet was made, along with other gifts, by members of St Agnes. A buffet supper followed and



□ Canon Frank Kearney celebrates his Diamond Jubilee with the Little Sisters of the Poor at St Joseph's Home, Newcastle.

a special jubilee cake was cut to mark the occasion.

The Order of Service booklet included a poem entitled "Heart's Gifts" which was written by the Canon.

Canon was born in August, 1929, and grew up in Blackhill, near Consett. He attended St Cuthbert's Grammar School before studying for the priesthood at Ushaw College and the

Venerable English College, Rome, the city where he was ordained by Cardinal Falconieri.

Canon was captivated by Rome, its architecture and its cultural beauty and when able he never missed an opportunity to revisit the Eternal City.

He served at St Columba's, Wallsend, St Mary's Cathedral, St Mary's, Forest Hall and fi-

nally St Agnes, Crawcrook, where he was parish priest from 1987 to 2011.

Canon is a much-loved and respected pastoral priest. Whenever asked how he is, he always happily replies "I'm very content". Long may you remain so, Canon.

● Andrew Jackson is a parishioner at St Agnes, Crawcrook.

FORWARD TOGETHER HOPE

Young are the 'now' of Church

YOUNG people across the North East are being asked for their views about the present and future of the Catholic Church in the diocese.

As part of the Forward Together in Hope programme, an online survey has been designed specifically for young people aged 11 to 19.

The survey is a direct response to initial feedback received from parishes and individuals about the priorities for the diocese.

Tony Sacco, Diocesan Development Officer, said: "A frequent comment is that we need to listen to and learn from young people if we are serious about engaging them more fully within our worshipping communities."

The survey will be open until February 2016. A link to the survey, along with a short video and leaflet, is being provided to all Catholic secondary schools and parishes in the diocese and can be found on the project's website. Go to www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk. The team can be contacted on 0191 243 3304.



COULD GOD BE CALLING YOU TO SERVE AS A PRIEST?

Diocesan Director of Vocations:
FR SHAUN O'NEILL
0191 273 3903
vocations@rcdhn.org.uk

Ghurkha aid concert

ST MARY'S, Stockton, is holding a song-night to raise funds for the Ghurkha Welfare Trust on Friday, December 18 at 7.30pm.

The £5 ticket will include mulled wine and mince pies, courtesy of the Co-operative Funeral Service.

The parish is hosting the

Co-op's memorial carol service on December 9, at 7pm, supported by the Salvation Army band.

Butterwick Hospice will hold its annual memorial service at St Mary's at 3pm on January 3.

For more information contact Bernadette Coyne on 01642 674461.

Teams join for Dip

THE Lourdes pilgrimage HCPT Group 527 and Hartlepool Youth Ministry Team have joined forces to raise funds through the Boxing Day Dip at Seaton Carew.

Both groups are appealing

for volunteers to join the team and sponsor forms can be obtained from Lynn Docherty (01429 298053), Mary Frain at St Teresa's School, Hartlepool (01429 274936), or Kevin Walsh, Youth Ministry co-ordinator (01429 267457).

Century of service in Blyth

A CONCELEBRATED Mass was held at Our Lady and St Wilfrid, Blyth, last month to mark the 100th anniversary of the parish's Society of St Vincent de Paul conference, writes Eileen Smith.

Parish priest Fr Philip Quinn was joined on the altar by Fr John Sherrington, from the Inner City Passionist Community in Newcastle, who is a former parishioner and past member of the Blyth conference.

The Mass, which took place on November 21, was attended by SVP members, representatives from other conferences, past members, the Youth SVP and Mini Vinnies.

The readers were former members Theresa Kingdon and Mary Crozier, while the Offertory gifts were presented by past members Billy Bell and Bill Armstrong; Steven Gregory and Thomas Fahey, representing the Youth SVP; and Lauren Taylor from the Mini Vinnies.

Afterwards a reception was held for parishioners and guests in the parish hall.

Mike Reynolds, president of the Tyne Central Council, paid tribute to the work of the Blyth conference and presented a certificate. An anniversary card was presented by Mini Vinnies Charlie Thompson and Lauren Taylor.



□ Kathleen Wilson, Acting President of St Wilfrid's SVP, Blyth, receives a certificate marking the conference's centenary year.

Book on early life of St Bede

JOE Stewart, a retired teacher, has written a book for children based on the early life of St Bede of Jarrow.

Bede's Well is a fictional account of the boyhood of Bede.

Joe, originally from Hebburn, has aimed the book at children from the age of ten upwards and adults who have an interest in local history.

For more information, go to www.joestewart.weebly.com, contact Joe on 0191 529 5947 or 07955 701393, or email him at joeclass456@outlook.com.

Let us look forward to exciting Year of Mercy

by Andrew Smith

THE Year of Mercy, which begins on Tuesday, December 8, could have a major transforming effect on ourselves, our churches and the diocese, Bishop Seamus Cunningham told members of a thriving diocesan Council of Laity in November.

"It could be a fantastic year, if we take it seriously," the Bishop said.

He told the packed meeting that the primary role of the lay person within the Church

was to evangelise. "It is the role of every baptised Christian," he said, and he asked that the committed faithful use the Year of Mercy to bring others, including 'resting' Catholics, back to the Church.

Outlining a year of special events to celebrate what Pope Francis instigated as the Year of Mercy, Bishop Seamus said: "We shouldn't be going it alone. We should encourage others to join us, rather like the 'come home for Christmas' initiative, that encourages non-churchgoers

to attend a Christmas Mass."

For his own part and reaching out to others, Bishop Seamus plans to visit every prison in the diocese over the year with the message that it is within their own power for prisoners the change their way of life.

"They obviously can't get out to attend church services but their cell door can become their 'holy door', and it can open for them."

And in a message to the separated, divorced and remarried Catholics, Bishop Seamus said that a recent

Bishops' Conference had determined that the Church should "walk with them" on a pathway to include them in church life.

"They are part of the Church," said the Bishop, "not excommunicated. We should journey with them, help and support them and be there for them."

Bishop Seamus also talked about discussions of the Bishops' Conference about the ordination of married men and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, both reported elsewhere in this issue.

He told the members of the Council of Laity that the diocesan Council of Priests was to be halved in the months ahead, with half of the members appointed by the Bishop and the other half elected.

Fr Simon Lerche, Diocesan Chancellor, reported on progress to introduce new statutes for the Council of Laity, council chair Julia Firbank updated members on meeting she had attended, Tony Sacco, Diocesan Development Director and Kathryn Turner, Head of Spirituality, led a presentation on the Forward Together in Hope project, and Fr Michael McCoy briefed the council on a review of baptism taking place across the diocese (also reported elsewhere in this issue).



□ Lunch Club volunteers with Fr Alex Ligori and Fr Louis Aroon. Pictured L-R are: Bernadette Osmialowski, Fr Ligori, Fr Louis, Margaret Wilson, Ann Charlton, Zoe Doherty and Agnes Skolimowska.

New priests break bread at volunteer-run lunch club

by Iris Boyd

GUESTS and volunteers at Holy Cross Lunch Club in Sunderland have wholeheartedly embraced two Carmelite priests who have recently arrived in the region from India.

Fr Alex Ligori and Fr Louis Aroon are living and serving at the Sacred Heart and St John Bosco parish in Sunderland, together with parish priest, Fr Mariadass.

With their parish duties covering the celebration of Mass for residents and visitors in the home's St Jeanne Jugan chapel, both Fr Louis and Fr Ligori have been delighted to be able to pop in to visit everyone at the lunch club. As well as being available to offer comfort and prayers, Fr Louis and Fr Ligori are enjoying the kindness and hospitality on offer, too,

and are being thoroughly looked after by the lunch club's volunteers and guests.

Held at Holy Cross twice a week, the lunch club was set up by St Cuthberts Care and the parishes across Sunderland to provide a sociable meal, activities and companionship for local people who feel lonely or isolated.

Run entirely by volunteers, the lunch club regularly at-

tracts around 20 guests and St Cuthberts Care's Volunteer Co-ordinator, Nicola Milne, would love to hear from anyone who would like to join the team of volunteers or anyone who wishes to go to the lunch club, which costs just £2.50 per person. Nicola can be contacted on 0191 228 0111 or email: nicola.milne@stcuthbertscare.org.uk.



□ Fr Louis Aroon and Fr Alex Ligori enjoy a meal at Holy Cross Lunch Club.



□ The Council of Laity welcomed new members to its November meeting from Deanery 7. Pictured (L-R) are Julia Fairbank (chair), Malcolm Shield, Jen Jones, Fr Jeff Dodds (Council Chaplain), Bishop Seamus, Katie Wilkinson and Pat Kennedy (clerk).

Diocese to review policy on baptism

THE criteria by which children are baptised across Hexham & Newcastle is to be the subject of wide-spread consultation within parishes in the months ahead.

It follows previous reviews of confession, first communion and confirmation, and the issue of new policies and guidelines.

Baptism was one of the sacraments Bishop Seamus Cunningham asked to be considered when he set up reviews of the varying practices and forms of preparation that existed throughout the diocese.

Fr Michael McCoy, Head of Adult Formation and

Evangelisation, is leading the review of baptism.

He told a meeting of the diocesan Council of Laity in November that it was the "hot potato" among the sacraments, in the sense of how it was celebrated and how people were prepared for it.

Fr McCoy said that the numbers of parents requesting that their children be baptised remained consistently high and, each year, an average of 3,500 baptism took place.

"We should be encouraged by this," he said, "but there should be a consistent approach to preparation for baptism. That is what Bishop

Seamus wants to see."

Fr McCoy said there needed to be "reasonable expectations" on both sides – what the parents expected and what the Church expected.

New guidelines would come from a broad consultation. A core group of priests and lay people had been established to steer the review. Consultations would take place in each of the six episcopal areas by mid-December and they were open to everyone.

Information and posters had gone to all parishes and three parishes from each episcopal area would be approached to lead the review in the New Year. It was hoped that this would comprise a large, medium and small parish in each area.

Between January and March, the core team would work with parishes in a detailed review, also involving parents.

"The main question we want to pose is 'What does it mean to be a baptised Catholic?'" said Fr McCoy. "We want to ensure that parents are prepared for baptism of their children. How are they welcomed? What support is offered 'post baptism'. What works well? What are the barriers? It need much more thought."

Fr McCoy said that primary school headteachers were also being consulted and asked for their help in identifying parents who were not active churchgoers.

What Fr McCoy called a "big challenge for the diocese" was to be brought to the next meeting of the Council of Laity, planned for March 12, for more detailed discussion.

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COMMENT

Worthy debate
whatever
the conclusion

THERE will be disappointment in some quarters of the Catholic Church that the Bishops of England and Wales have decided that this is not the time to support the ordination of married men to the priesthood.

That the matter was discussed at all by the bishops at their Plenary Assembly last month is thanks to the priests of Hexham & Newcastle asking Bishop Seamus Cunningham to raise the matter, and the Bishop agreeing to do so.

Quite how far the disappointment might extend is unknown, because to date there has been no poll or survey of Catholics to determine the support for such a move – not that such matters are ever decided by a referendum.

The reports and letters in the Catholic press, including the Northern Cross, might suggest that the groundswell of opinion is in favour of ordaining married priests of proven good character but, again, it is not a reliable measure. Those who shout loudest do not generally represent the majority.

However, it is probably fair to assume that the biggest disappointment at the bishops' decision will lie in parishes that have closed or merged after losing their parish priests, with none to replace them.

Perhaps, in the absence of strong direction from the Pope, it was always going to be unlikely that the bishops of England and Wales, who each chose to sacrifice the love and support of a wife and family in order to follow their vocation, were ever going to overturn a 1,000-year tradition linking the priesthood and celibacy, and send a message to Rome that this country supported the ordination of married priests.

What we also might assume is that this will not be the last time the bishops are asked to consider the possibility of ordaining married priests.

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YMT creator
an 'inspiration'
- Bishop Seamus

I AM writing to inform you that after 21 years of dedicated service to the young people of our diocese, Fr Dermott Donnelly will be moving on from his direct involvement with the Youth Ministry Trust in December of this year.

This will enable Fr Dermott to develop his ministry at the cathedral and to take up his role as head of the Diocesan Department for Youth, with the aim of encouraging Catholic youth agencies across the diocese.

I want to express my gratitude to Fr Dermott, who has really been both inspirational and instrumental in creating and developing the concept of the Youth Ministry Trust within our diocese. The legacy of the Youth Village and Youth Ministry within our diocese are a great credit to the work of Fr Dermott and the Youth Ministry Team and its pioneering role.

To prepare for this change, since January 2014 Tony Lawless has taken on the role of Director of Youth Ministry. I know Tony has been well supported by Fr Dermott as he settles in to this role, for which again I am grateful.

In order that the work of YMT can continue to develop, I am putting in place a Pastoral Advisory Team so that appropriate support can be provided to the YMT staff and volunteers into the future. This team will comprise Mgr Andrew Faley and Sr Patricia Bell, who have all kindly agreed to take on this important task.

I hope that as YMT enters this new phase of its ministry and mission we will all support the many efforts and initiatives in our diocese to bring the Gospel of Christ to our young people.

Rt Rev Séamus Cunningham,
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.

Holy Communion 'a privilege'

IT IS with deep sadness that I read Ms A Lardeur's letter in the November edition of the Northern Cross.

The Mass is not just Mass, it is the Holy Mass and Holy Communion is not about receiving a piece of "chewable bread". Holy Communion is the reality of receiving the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Until today's Catholic

Church accepts this huge privilege that God has given us, the Church will continue to deteriorate.

Notwithstanding Ms Lardeur's quotes from the Holy Bible, it is sad that many Roman Catholics are unable to accept that the receiving of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion is God's gift to us and not some earthly food.

No provision for 'believe as you go'

OH, the joy to find a kindred spirit, though he may not enjoy being so associated.

But how many kindred spirits are out there who simply don't correspond but who, like Mr Paul Hammond, have serious misgivings about unbalanced liberal emphasis of their diocesan newspapers' 'Comment' and supportive articles which often appear to the reader to be closely aligned?

The danger is that because it's 'in the paper' (like on TV) some people may believe that this represents the status quo. It doesn't.

How personal does a view have to be before coming close to being unrecognisable as orthodox Catholic and, indeed, in need of a disclaiming doctrinal health warning.

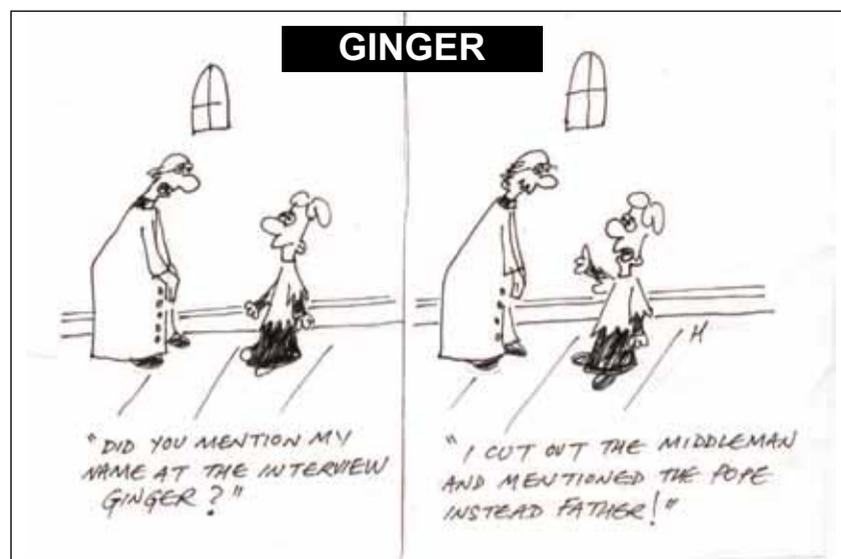
Freedom of belief/express-

sion is a priceless commodity though for the faithful Catholic it will be tempered by his/her loyal commitment to the teachings of the faith.

I hope I'm not being too presumptuous in saying that Catholics need encouragement, uplift and a sense of pride in our beliefs (all of them), not the negative carping criticism and reminders of our shortcomings every month. We don't need constant urgings to 'get with it'.

The Church, as ever throughout its history, must respond to change in its operation, administration and pastoral outreach without compromise of truth. Truth is truth, regardless of how many agree or dissent.

The problem for today's relativist world, especially the West, is that truth often demands sacrifice, humility and obedience, qualities

'Wonderful' Northern Cross
brings back happy memories

I'M FROM Durham City and now live in the Seattle area, USA.

An English friend in Durham recently mailed me several copies of your wonderful Northern Cross newspaper, with its interesting news items and colour photographs.

It brought back so many memories of times past – my lovely old St Godric's

Church, our cottage home at St Leonard's, N.End etc.

Our dad, Leo Conway, was the school's caretaker/groundsman and we would play in the wood and have fun near the strange obelisk.

Finchale Abbey also brought back memories of pilgrimages and picnics in its grounds. Of course, Durham Cathedral revived many thoughts of its glorious location high above the River Wear and the beautiful interior with its famous rose window.

I was surprised that Ushaw College is now more a retreat locale than a seminary but, of course, like in the States, vocation numbers have dropped.

We have a parish – St Anthony's – here in Renton, of around 6,000 with six Masses on weekends and many parishioners have to stand in the foyer or out on the pavement.

We're ecumenical in that we have parishioners from

many places – local, South America, Taiwan, the Philippines, Europe, Mexico and so on. We only have two priests to say all the Masses.

I was surprised to read that vocations are plentiful (in some parts of the world), that nuns are working nowadays out in the world and giving retreats etc.

I even recognised one of our Sisters of Mercy shaking hands with the Pope. The change of outdated habit to a more modern garb is a good thing too and possibly encourages more vocations for girls.

Thank you so much for your wonderful newswriting and colour photographs, which brought back to us nostalgic memories and new beginnings in the faith.

Anne Healy,
St Anthony's Parish,
Renton,
Washington,
USA, 98057.

Nothing too
much trouble
for Karen

THANK you for the wonderful tribute paid to Karen Burbridge (above) on the occasion of her retirement.

I personally have benefited from her help in setting up our parish website. Nothing was too much trouble, no matter how trivial a task I asked of her. Karen would even follow up with personal phone calls to ensure I was satisfied and to enquire if I needed any further help.

Wishing her all the best for her retirement.
Veronica Yarwood
(by email).

NORTHERN CROSS welcomes letters for publication. In order to allow as many letters as possible to be used, please try to restrict the length to 300 words. The editor reserves the right to edit contributions without reference in order to reduce their length or to correct grammatical or punctuation errors. Please send to: Northern Cross Letters, St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington DL1 2DR.

LETTERS

Feast of confusion in effort to keep a date

I AM WRITING this on All Saints Day, which this year is being celebrated on a Sunday, for the perfectly good reason that November 1 has fallen on a Sunday.

By contrast, in this country as if it were a purely national matter, the Epiphany, Ascension Day and Corpus Christi are always kept on Sundays, regardless of their real days.

Even the Church of England does not think that it has the authority to alter Ascension Day, which is specified in the Bible, nor

would it dream of departing from one of the Liturgical Year's last points of contact with popular culture by cutting the 12 days of Christmas to however many there might happen to be under this peculiar arrangement.

Many of its parishes have kept Corpus Christi since the middle of the 19th Century and, if not necessarily for the most heartening of reasons, probably more than half of them do so now. But none of them would dream of doing so in this historically and liturgi-

cally illiterate manner.

Methodists, too, always keep the Epiphany on January 6, and Ascension Day 40 days after Easter. Well, of course they do. Like the Pope, in fact. Again, of course.

Moreover, we continue to be subjected on All Saints Day, not to the Beatitudes, but to the Happytudes. Or, as they might otherwise be termed, the Hippytudes.

There has never been any obligation to use the atrocious Jerusalem Bible in the Liturgy, and now that everything else has at long

last been translated into grown-up English, there is a most urgent need to stop doing so. As one among numerous possible examples, its attempt at the Ten Commandments is also spectacularly inept.

The RSV Catholic Edition is by far the best translation into Modern English (an idiom that no one used liturgically until Catholics decided to reinvent the wheel in the 1960s, but that is another story), and even before an edition of the new English Missal using it, it would be perfectly

possible simply to read out the appointed passages from it.

Meanwhile, I have been told that some school RE departments were using the Good News Bible, making them the last people on earth who were still doing that. The famous stick illustrations do lend themselves to the colouring in that 16-year-olds are expected to do for an hour each day, I suppose. But of that, another time.

David Lindsay,
Foxhills Crescent,
Lanchester.

Super supper for disabled

LEONARD Cheshire Disability is urging people to get together for a Super Supper to raise money for our work supporting disabled people.

A Super Supper can be easy or challenging, themed or straightforward with home-made food or something ready-made. Anyone signing up to host a Super Supper will receive a pack including menus, place cards, donation envelopes and table confetti.

For more information, please visit leonardcheshire.org/suppers or call 020 3242 0264.

Klara Wertheim,
Events Officer,
Leonard Cheshire
Disability.

Ashes should be buried in consecrated ground, not scattered

THE Spiritual and Corporal works of Mercy might be considered appropriate discussion topics as we are about to begin the Holy Year of Mercy.

Church teaching states that burying the dead is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy, and as I am writing this in November, the month of the Holy Souls, I'm prompted to bring up an aspect of that for discussion.

As part of that group of people euphemistically said to be in the 'Third Age', (ie. a senior citizen), I seem to be attending more funerals than in former

years.

Naturally so, you might say, but in so doing, I have noticed that after cremation services there is usually little reference to the final resting place of the ashes of the deceased.

For practical reasons, the ashes of a loved one will be given to the next of kin some time later which brings me to my point - what to do with those Ashes?

Although it's not mentioned much - death is the last taboo subject - we Catholics have a duty to place those ashes in the special urn and bury them in consecrated ground,

such as at the foot of the family grave. If we do not have a family grave, the undertaker will advise.

Indeed, it is the undertaker whose duty it is to bury the ashes, usually in the presence of loved ones, a couple of weeks after the funeral. There is a charge for this, which can be incorporated into the funeral costs.

Remember that it is only in recent years that

Catholics were permitted to select cremation rather than burial, so perhaps it's up to us to clarify that our own duty is to 'keep the faith' and be Catholic.

These days, many folk formulate pre-paid funeral plans where they can stipulate their wishes, so I would very respectfully ask you - please, please, don't scatter.

Bryony Foley,
(by email)

Courage comes from command

DAVID O'Neill wonders how any of the laity dare to accept the Body of Christ in their unworthy hands at Communion' (Northern Cross, October 2015).

We dare to because we obey the command given to us by Our Blessed Lord at His Last Supper.

In the same way, we dare to call God our Father, and can pray with confidence because this is what Jesus taught us to do.

At every Mass we pray the Lord's Prayer and then acknowledge our unworthiness before we receive Communion by saying together "Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and my soul will be healed."

We acknowledge that God's love for us revealed in Christ overcomes our sinfulness.

Our communion is not only the receiving of Christ.

It acknowledges that we are one with Christ and each other. (Pope John Paul Sunday Missal)

The Mass has certainly never been changed from a 'sacrifice' into a 'meal'. It is the Mass of all ages, and in my Catechism of the Catholic Church, there is a wonderful description of the Eucharistic celebration written by St Justin around the year 155, explaining what Christians did. (1345-1347)

It states that "the liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day".

I hope my observations are helpful to other readers of the Northern Cross and serve in some small way to reassure them that our Mass remains what it has always been.

Bernadette Hirst,
Low Fell,
Gateshead.



A Christmas card to crow about

PICTURE the scene: mantelpiece decked with colourful Christmas cards - robins, reindeer and crows.

Ok, no crows; they're not popular in any season. Robins, on the other hand, are officially the UK's favourite bird - red breasted cheeky chappies. At heart, though, it's aggressive to its own kind and others, not unlike the crow with its murderous habits.

So why is one the nation's darling while the other is labelled vermin?

Vermin - there's a word with potential for venom, demanding to be spat out with hatred. It's defined as any creature that is troublesome to man, damaging crops or livestock, causing disease - a heavy-duty pest.

No creature is born verminous, it simply upsets humankind. I had nothing against grey squirrels until they cost me a new roof.

Farmers and gamekeepers convinced me that there's 'a list' of vermin, an official death warrant, a licence to exterminate. Not so, says the man from the ministry, though there may be specific problems where exceptions can be made.

There is, however, a list of creatures protected against killing, so those not included are presumably fair game. Protected status is no guarantee of safety, though, as in the badger's case, accused of complicity in cattle TB, or birds of prey, hated by the managers of grouse moors.

One man's cuddly creature is another man's vermin. Even the family moggy, beloved vermin catcher, is a hated bird killer.

Vermin, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder; so in the spirit of Christmas let's have a crow on a Christmas card.

John Lavis

BACK NUMBERS December 1990

LETTERS from Lambeth Palace acknowledging the growing prayer campaign for the hostages in Beirut praised the Page 1 initiative of the Northern Cross.

The comment from Mrs Waite was sent to Hartlepool parishioner Kay Campbell, who was sent a note and cuttings from the Cross and the secretary of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, wrote to the Cross with thanks for continuing to keep alive the hostages in prayer and the prominence of them each month on the front page.

TYNESIDER Fr Michael Weymes, serving with the Army of the Rhine joined the land-based forces in the Middle East in December

1990 as part of the Army Chaplain's service with the rank of captain.

He was part of a team of inter-denominational chaplains, including Catholic priests.

Fr Kevin Vasey, of Hexham & Newcastle diocese, who was serving with the Army in Germany, was awarded the OBE for services to the troops in Northern Ireland. This was in addition to his Northern Ireland medal.

Fr Kevin was commissioned in August, 1979, six years after his ordination in St John Vianney Church, Hartlepool, the town where he was born.

Fr Kevin served in England, Northern Ireland, Germany and Cyprus.

NORTH West Durham MP Hilary Armstrong in-

ited St John's Comprehensive School, Bishop Auckland, to meet sixth-formers and talk to them about the role of women in public life in November 1990.

Pupils were invited to go to Westminster for work experience in the world of politics.

ENGLAND billiards international John Murphy returned to his old school to collect an award he was not expecting.

John, 22, has a string of

billiards achievements to his name including, 'Number 1' in a four-sided tournament with Ireland, Belgium and Northern Ireland.

The international player attended awards day at English Martyrs School, Hartlepool, to receive the Chairman of Governors' award for bringing honour to the school.

Comedian Frank Carson presented the award.

●Research by Mavis McCretton

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A personal view by GERRY LOUGHRAN, a Newcastle-born retired foreign correspondent

Religion in the media? 'It's like reporting soccer from the hooligan's point of view'

A FOREIGN correspondent reporting the Christmas story from the Holy Land wrote of "the alleged Virgin birth," watched by "the mythical ox and ass" at "the supposed birthplace of Jesus".

Another journalist, a young man whose father was the ombudsman on a major American daily, told me: "My family is atheist. I never studied religion at school. I know nothing about Christianity."

And a viewer commenting on a story about the Vatican's financial scandals asked: "Why does the BBC spend time on this evil organisation?"

The Bethlehem reporter was swiftly slapped down by his editor, but his attitude and the other comments point to a yawning credulity gap in the matter of religion, involving both writer and reader.

The situation is exacerbated by press illiteracy and the lazy but widespread belief that secularism has triumphed.

Michael Wakelin, former head of religion and ethics at the BBC, summed up media coverage of religion as "a bit like covering football from the point of view of hooliganism and never really watching the game".

Wakelin was speaking at a conference in London recently on Islam and its treatment in British broadcasting and newspapers, though the debate

swiftly spread to all faiths. An analysis showed that the reporting of Muslim affairs frequently concentrated on the veil and the burkha, immigration, violence, halal slaughter and poppy burning.

Christians do little better. How often have we Catholics quailed at the media's misuse of language: "The pope conducted an open-air Mass," "Reverend O'Reilly said..." "The priest gave confession to worshippers..."

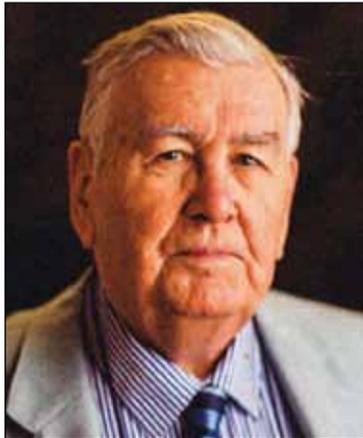
The popular press is frequently diverted by practices which Catholics take for granted, such as candles, statues, holy water and the burning of incense.

The Sun reported that "a law banning legal highs could stop churches using incense. Helpfully, it added that incense "has been used for worship purposes for millennia".

I once heard a rather posh fellow say he had nothing against Christianity but he did not know a single believer and religion never came up at his dinner parties. Clearly, he considered faith a minority pursuit and irrelevant to his life.

The same must go for the very many people who only ever enter churches for weddings and funerals, reporters included.

Prof Adam Dinham, of Goldsmiths



□ Gerry Loughran.

University in London, would question this perception. As reported by The Observer newspaper, he said: "Billions of people around the world remain religious, despite assumptions of secularism. Millions are in Britain, Europe and the West. After decades in which we have barely talked about religion and belief in public discourse, society has largely lost the ability to do so."

The perceived irrelevance of faith is reflected in our culture. Seldom do we find a Christian portrayed in drama and when we do, he is usually a weak

person, a bigot, a criminal or an idiot. Am I the only person to tense up when a clerical collar or a nun's habit appears on TV outside of a comedy series?

Of course, Islam and Christianity have made themselves easy targets. The terror attacks in Paris and elsewhere by Islamic State, the clerical abuse scandal in the Catholic Church and reports from Rome of Curia prelates living in apartments worth £20 million will easily lead to our characterisation as "an evil organisation."

And it is not enough to point to the obvious fact that not all Muslims are homicidal barbarians and not all Catholics child-abusers or property moguls. We surely need to be pro-active and Wakelin has offered suggestions for combating religious stereotyping.

These include finding knowledgeable individuals from a variety of religious backgrounds to communicate with mass media outlets, and ensuring believers inform themselves regarding developments in media technology, including wide use of the internet.

My guess is most news organisations would admit that they do not understand religion and therefore keep it at arm's length.

Help may be at hand, however, with

the establishment of a religious media centre on the lines of the successful Science Media Centre in London. This latter, headed by journalist Fiona Fox, incidentally once of Cafod, is an independent charity set up in 2002 to renew public trust in science. Staffed by scientists and journalists, it has helped to transform the way science is reported when it hits the headlines.

Wakelin is involved in setting up a religious counterpart which he believes could do a similar job. He said: "We do not want to promote religion or even say that it is good thing, but we want recognition that it matters and therefore needs to be reported, discussed and examined with knowledge, fairness and respect."

He added: "To carry on mocking religion, misreporting it with unhelpful shorthand and careless choice of image or pretending it is going to go away, or that it is of interest only to people intent on destruction, is not going to wash any more."

● Gerry Loughran is a retired journalist. You can contact him on Gerryo69@hotmail.com

The views in this article do not necessarily reflect those of Northern Cross or of the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle.

Stone me! Stan pens the perfect stocking filler

STAN BECKENSALL is a specialist in rock art. So it won't surprise you a bit to learn that the major opus on his home and favourite county, Northumberland, features a great many stones.

Former headteacher, teacher trainer and Hon Doctor of Letters at Newcastle University, Stan has published more than 40 books and pamphlets, including some poetry and drama.

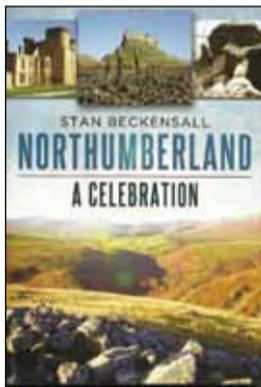
Poetry figures prominently in Northumberland, A Celebration – a possible stocking filler for an extra gift (at under £20), but the ideal present for the amateur history buff, geology ringer, or simple lover of the county that is still the best-kept secret the North East has managed to hide.

We choose two lines from Autumn Gold to illustrate the theme:

*We touch the rock for reassurance
That next year will be the same, ...*

The rock is from "the rounded Cheviots".

We could pick Holy Island as a favourite from Stan's book, but any true rover will have a stone barn full of ideas to plan weekly outings for the next year – the sandstone formation at Caller Crag, the wood runes at Lemington Hill, bronze age 'food vessels' from the Cheviot hills, beaker pottery from Wether Hill, Ingram village, and



□ Stones, stones ... and rolling countryside – that's Northumberland.

Breamish Valley, for the family which enjoys simple stuff like a shallow river full of flat stones for skimming.

There are castles galore – in detail and with history to mug up on – war and peace at the Border, Flodden from Etal and Ford, Craggside, the confluence of rivers to form the Tyne, bridges, churches, abbeys, ruins and holy places, and empty spaces in Hexhamshire and the Cheviots.

You will not wish to stir from your place at the Christmas dinner table as you plan 2016's excursions.

● Northumberland, A Celebration, by Stan Beckensall, published by Fonthill, Oxford, ISBN: 978-1-78155-253-7, in paperback £18.99.

Tea and chat with the nice folk upstairs

THE warm hand of friendship quickly multiplied into many warm hands of friendship, following a recent suggestion by St Cuthberts Care Chief Executive, Moira Ashman.

Moira proposed that the charity's head office teams should consider hosting an afternoon tea in their offices for residents from St Catherine's nursing home, which is located on the ground floor of the charity's headquarters at St Cuthbert's House in Newcastle.

Staff warmly welcomed the special visitors and have been delighted to play an active part in enriching their lives.

Moira said: "I'm fortunate to be able to visit our residents in their home on a regular basis, and I was aware that some residents have few or sometimes no visitors. I like to pop into my neighbours' homes for a catch up every now and again, and I thought that



□ St Cuthberts Care Chief Executive, Moira Ashman meets Ada Quigley.

many of our residents would really appreciate the opportunity to do this with us too."

Ada Quigley was one of the first residents to visit the charity's offices and take part in the social occasion. "I think it's a wonder-

ful idea," said Ada. "I've really enjoyed myself and felt thoroughly pampered."

"I often think about the staff who work upstairs and now I can picture them all in my mind when I remember them in my prayers."

Moira added: "It was so

lovely to have our offices filled with laughter and conversation for a short time, and to see the enjoyment on our residents' faces that we've decided to make this a weekly event. It's what being a good neighbour is all about."

Guests remembered in art

ARTIST Mike Brogan, is staging a one-man exhibition of work this month in Hartlepool.

Mike, who each year painted a portrait of high-profile guest speakers at his school's awards nights and often made ceramic gifts for them numbers among

his subjects the Duke of Norfolk, the late Brian Clough, the late Cardinal Basil Hume and many others.

Mike, now retired and living in Billingham, made many friends, leading a Friday art tutorial at English Martyrs School, Hartle-

pool, for adult enthusiasts. It's now run by former colleague Roy Carless.

Mike's exhibition will feature studio pottery and paintings in English Martyrs School & Sixth Form College art gallery, Catcote Road, Hartlepool, until the New Year.



CrossLines

HARTLEPOOL'S youth mission team is planning a brisk start to the New Year – after joining the Boxing Day dip at Seaton Carew.

The youth team has two possible locations for a pray-over night on Friday, January 8 – St Patrick's Church, Owton Manor or the Convent near the town centre. The team is to consult.

The annual Candlemas procession, service and barbecue fire is proposed for Saturday, January 30, at St Joseph's.

MINIBUS trips to Newcastle are planned to take young people from Hartlepool to join in youth activities at St Mary's Cathedral.

The first was timed for December 2 to join The Source, a successful monthly inspirational night. The second visit, on Wednesday, December 9, is for the Cathedral's Advent service, Illuminations (6-7pm).

TWENTY young people enjoyed an evening of games, activity, praise and worship in St Joseph's parish centre, Hartlepool, on Friday, November 20. Organisers hope to build on the attendance for future events.

RACE NIGHT the Lindisfarne Catholic Club, Wallsend, are to stage a Northern Cross Race Night on Saturday, February 27. All welcome.

The Cross needs help with deliveries

THE Northern Cross is delivered to more than 150 parishes in the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle each month and we are extremely grateful to the unseen team of volunteers who help to carry out this vital role.

Since we have moved our office from Hartlepool to Darlington, we would like to enlist the help of a few additional volunteers to take papers from St Anne's, Welbeck Avenue, Darlington, to two drops in Hartlepool.

The delivery would consist of three postage sacks containing in total about 250 newspapers for mailing to our subscribers and seven bundles of about 50 papers each to be left at the parish office at St Joseph's Church, Hartlepool.

The papers would need to be collected by 2pm on the Thursday afternoon during the week prior to the first Sunday of the month.

If you think you could help us in this delivery or wish to learn a little more about the task, please contact Northern Cross director Tom Hoban on 0191 386 7033, or email him at hobantom@btinternet.com

Correction

WE have been asked to point out that the Third Order of Carmelites celebrated the 40th anniversaries of two tertiaries, Fr Malcolm Cairns and Peter Seach, and not their 25th anniversaries, as we were informed and reported upon last month.



□ Fr Peter Leighton after his induction Mass at St Pauls Church.

Warm welcome for Fr Leighton

THE parishes of St Paul, Alnwick, St Aidan, Seahouses and St Aidan, Holy Island, along with all in our deanery welcomed Fr Peter Leighton at his induction Mass at St Pauls Church.

Parishioners, friends and school children gathered in prayer to warmly welcome Fr Peter to the Catholic community in his new role as parish priest, residing at St Paul's and working closely with existing resident parish priest Fr Desmond McGivern.

The dean of Northumberland, Fr Ian Hoskins provide the homily along with a plethora of anecdotes that echoed the warmth of the evening.

After Mass, food was provided and the meeting of new and old friends was evident to see as the church filled with chatter and warm wishes.

The entire Northumberland deanery would like to extend our prayers and support to Fr Peter and all the people and parishes he serves.

Ushaw College opens its doors for Christmas

by Roger Kelly

ANOTHER year comes to an end at Ushaw and it's been a busy and productive one.

Last year saw the start of the concerts and events programme open to all and the opening of Ushaw to the public every Saturday during the summer.

During that time we had 7,500 visitors, we established a café and shop and inaugurated an exhibition programme.

Kathryn Tickell, and the Royal Northern Sinfonia performed alongside the Burnley Cloggers led by Fr John Marsland himself and many other regional and national musicians and ensembles.

Art, history, lectures, concerts, organ recitals, jazz and folk concerts and of course Vespers in the chapel – sung every month and said every week.

A team of talented and hardworking gardeners have transformed the formal gardens, building upon the tremendous work of the Alumni – St Cuthbert's Society.

The herbaceous borders have been replanted, work

is starting on the creation of a Garden of Remembrance with 465 roses being planted in memory of the staff and students at Ushaw who fought in the first World War. This is being financed with support from St Cuthbert's Society.

The programme could not have taken place without the marvellous team of volunteers – nearly 100.

Anyone wanting to join please contact us on volunteers@ushaw.org it's a happy and rewarding experience – a good way of making friends and being involved in something extraordinary and meaningful.

We are also indebted to the warm and welcoming approach of Fr John Marsland, the President and tireless support of Peter Seed, the Director of Estates.

This Advent and Christmas there is a full programme of concerts and shows – The Snowman film is being shown accompanied by the County Youth Orchestra.

We have concerts and carols galore. The traditional Ushaw Carol Service is on December 15 and 16

at 7.30.p.m. and Christmas Afternoon Teas are to be served in the Refectory on December 5 and 12 (booking essential).

Fr John is hosting a Quiet Day for Advent on Tuesday December 8.

Our season finishes with some glorious relaxing Jazz with the wonderful voice of Ruth Lambert and her Trio on December 18.

Programme details are available on our website at www.ushaw.org

Next year promises even more in the way of concerts and events.

The season will formally open on the weekend of St Cuthbert's Feast, March 18, 19 and 20, which will be celebrated in style.

We hope to reopen the former Museum for major exhibitions and two new smaller exhibition rooms. A World War 1 room and a room dedicated to student life at Ushaw including references to some of its distinguished alumni – Patrick Lafcadio Hearn and Francis Thompson.

There will be three weekend Jazz festivals with national and local bands, Folk, Kathryn Tickell and Alistair Anderson sur-

rounded by local bands. There may be a classical event involving the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

We have financial support from the Arts Council, Durham University, Durham County Council and St Cuthbert's Society.

On the commercial front from January we will be open as Ushaw Durham for day conferences, seminars and development days.

We have bookings for tours and visits next year from parish groups, history and heritage societies.

We will be marketing the 1960s east wing as a business centre with space for offices, hot-desking and business meetings. There will be flexible catering arrangements building upon the experience we have had with our café this year and our gift shop will include many locally produced goods.

For more information see www.ushaw.org or call 0191 334 5119.

We have learnt much over the last year and hope that next year's offering and developments will be more impressive, but with the same warm and enthusiastic welcome.

Mass celebrates Healing of God

AS WE enter into the Year of Mercy, there is to be a service of healing with Bishop Seamus Cunningham at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle, on Wednesday, January 27, at 7pm.

It will consist of a penitential rite, listening to and reflecting on the word of God, focusing particularly on the mercy of God.

There will be adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and time for prayer ministry. Priests will be available to hear confession. All are invited to attend.

Voices boost charities

VOICES TOGETHER is a four-part harmony mixed voice choir who regularly sing at weddings, funerals and concerts raising money for various causes.

They have supported the lifeboats, Macmillan, St Benedict's Hospice, Smile Train, the Royal British Legion, Teenage Cancer Trust, St Clare's Hospice, Motor Neurone Disease, Sir Bobby Robson Foundation, and the Chernobyl Children's Lifeline.

Starting with a few members in 2003, the group now numbers 19 voices.

The music repertoire is varied, from sacred to musicals and popular songs. The choice of music at weddings and funerals can be personal.

The choir has donated its fees currently amounting to £36,000.

It covers South Tyneside and Sunderland. For more information go to: www.voicestogether.co.uk. - Maureen Hope, Secretary.

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Saturday 5th 1.00.p.m. **DURHAM COUNTY WIND BAND** - Ushaw open 12.00.-4.00.p.m.*

Tuesday 8th 10.30.a.m. - 4.00.p.m. **ADVENT QUIET DAY WITH MGR. JOHN MARSLAND** (£15 including light lunch)

Friday 11th 7.30.p.m. **CONCERT OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC FEATURING THE SNOWMAN** (Admission £5.00. cons. £3.00) Durham County Youth Orchestra /Choir
Please book ahead.

Saturday 12th 3.00.p.m. **CONCERT OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC FEATURING THE SNOWMAN** (Admission £5.00. cons. £3.00) Durham County Youth Orchestra/Choir.
Ushaw open 12.00.-4.00.p.m.*

Sunday 13th 6.00.p.m. **CHRISTMAS CONCERT** (Admission £5.00. children under 16yrs free)
Durham Cathedral Young Singers

Tuesday 15th 7.30.p.m. **USHAW CAROL SERVICE** (Ticket only)

Wednesday 16th 7.30.p.m. **USHAW CAROL SERVICE** (Ticket only)

Friday 18th 7.30.p.m. Jazz at Christmas with the Ruth Lambert Trio Admission £6.00

*CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON TEA - £10.00 December 5th and 12th Booking essential

Get your tickets and book for Afternoon tea at tickets@ushaw.org



Hundreds celebrate the gift of faith

by Lilian Simpson

AROUND 400 people of all ages, from babies to 90 plus, came flocking to St Joseph's Academy in Hebburn recently for the Celebrate North East conference.

We were blessed by Bishop Seamus coming to Celebrate with us, as well as a number of priests and deacons joining the laity in celebrating the love of God and the gift of faith.

As everyone was welcomed it soon became clear that this was indeed to be a celebration weekend – full of joy, laughter, love and togetherness.

This is only the second year that Celebrate has been to the North East and obviously the word had got

round as chairs rapidly filled up for our introductory talk by David Payne, followed by a lively mime by Steve Murray.

The format for the day was simple: children of all ages were catered for in different age streams, ensuring that they were included, made new friends, and discovered that 'Church' can be a place of fun, joy and love.

Adults attended the general talks, then were offered a variety of workshops on topics as diverse as spirituality, Jesus, music, dance, Church teaching and new DVD courses available for all parishes.

Everyone opted for their favourite topics and made their way to various rooms in the Academy to listen and join in with their cho-

sen speaker and facilitator.

As my interest was in the new resources available, I chose to go to talks by David Payne and Michelle Moran on The Gift, which is currently being run by several parishes in the Diocese, and The Big Picture, which will be available from mid-January.

The Gift was produced as a result of Pope Francis' request that all the faithful should have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and be aware of The Baptism of the Holy Spirit often quoted as the Church's best kept secret!

The Big Picture is a 12 week course on Scripture, filmed on location in the Holy Land, Ephesus, Patmos and Rome with worldwide experts, introduced by Cardinal Vincent Nichols,



Fr Mulcahy hosts a workshop. Above right, Steve Murray performs one of his mimes.



which I think will bring new life to our understanding of Scripture – Old and New Testaments alike.

I spoke with a number of people over Saturday and

Sunday and all were full of enthusiasm about their chosen workshops – Fr Eamonn Mulcahy bringing humour and wit into his sessions, Ronan Johnston and Anne Liddell with music workshops and Kathryn Turner and Pat Kennedy on aspects of personal spirituality.

Fr Eamonn, a Spiritan priest, celebrated Mass with us on Saturday, bringing that joy and love of the Gospel that we sometimes forget to celebrate and after our afternoon workshops, we were treated to an excellent hot meal, followed by our second talk of the day with Michelle Moran, who had flown in from Rome.

She is a founder member of Sion Catholic Community, member of the Pontifical Council of the Laity, President of ICCRS, the International Council for Renewal in Rome and chair of the NSC for Catholic

Charismatic Renewal in England and Wales.

Michelle spoke of our need to keep on being filled up by the Holy Spirit.

After a time of gentle prayer ministry the day came to a close with people all clamouring to come back on Sunday.

On Sunday morning, Steve Murray gave a very moving testimony of his conversion to Christ and performed another of his wonderful mimes.

He spoke of how our actions may touch the lives of those we meet and we may be the gospel that people read.

Our final Mass of Celebration was concelebrated with Fr Bill O'Gorman and Fr Harry Ryan strongly supported by the music group led by Ronan and his wife Joanne and then sadly, all began to pack up and go home.

Comments from participants were all greatly ap-

preciative and they are looking forward to another Celebrate north east in 2016!

Comments included such words as absolutely fantastic; fire, joy and most of all the love of Jesus; a real experience of faith; felt the hammer hit the nail; fire in the talks; great, but down to earth teachers who could really identify with people; uplifted and inspired; challenging, nourished by the Word of God; would like something more regularly.

One participant who came for the second time this year said "It's made a massive difference to our lives. It continues to keep me well and enrich the lives of myself and my children."

Perhaps next year, you might be inspired to come along and join us.

Many thanks to our wonderful organisers, workshop leaders and all attendees.

ANNE and Tony Stokle and their family, parishioners of Holy Name parish in Gosforth, have been campaigners and voluntary aid workers on behalf of the oppressed people of Burma. They travelled to Burma, now called Myanmar, for the first election of a new government in 25 years. Contrary to fears of corruption, intimidation and cheating, it appears that the people of Myanmar are now going to be afforded their overwhelming choice of a government formed by the National League for Democracy, whose charismatic and respected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the Stokles have met during previous visits. Here TONY STOKLE describes their experience of the election and the celebration that followed.

Election brings new hope to the people of Burma

THE polls for the Burma election opened at 6am on November 8, 2015, but queues formed from 5am. The people were going to vote for the first time since 1990.

We had been to Mass early on this Sunday and prayers had been said for a just and peaceful election.

Many tourists had stayed away from Burma fearing violence.

Anne and I spoke to many people as we visited polling stations in Yangon. "It's time for change" and "We are not afraid any more" were the most common comments. The indelible ink on the left hand little

finger proved they had voted.

In the afternoon we gathered with thousands of others outside the National League for Democracy (NLD) headquarters waiting for Aung San Suu Kyi to come and speak to us. Disappointingly, it was announced that she would not be speaking tonight but maybe tomorrow, when the election result was known.

Next morning we were back at the NLD headquarters. Our friend Zaw Tun excitedly told us it had been a landslide victory for the NLD but nothing had been confirmed by the Union Election Committee. People were fearful that the military would 'cheat' and change the result.

We waited for hours with thousands of supporters, all very excited, hoping for a historic victory. Film crews from around the world were set up at every vantage point. However, we were conscious people were anxious, looking around, fearful the police would come to disperse the crowd.

Suddenly the crowd surged forward into the road and a row of cars pulled up in front of the headquarters. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi - Mother Suu as she is affectionately known - stepped from her car. Photographers flashed wildly as her security team cleared a way for her. The music blasted out on the PA system and people danced and sang, "We love Mother Suu. We want democracy".

Daw Suu and U Htin Oo (Chair of NLD) came out on to a high balcony. Behind them was a huge NLD

poster. The crowd fell silent as she spoke, wanting to know the result.

She thanked all her supporters for delivering an election victory but she asked them all to remain calm. She said it was not yet the time to celebrate. There was a lot of negotiation still to do.

Everyone knew the NLD had a landslide victory but would it count? In 1990 the military annulled the vote - would the same happen again?

Ever the diplomat Daw Suu cautioned the crowd not to do anything that might cause the military to act against them. Celebrations would have to wait; there was still work to do. There would be no street party today.

"We are happy in our hearts," said one wise young man who told us of his years in a refugee camp waiting for this day and how he hoped for a brighter future for him and his children.

Anne and I have waited for nearly 20 years for this moment - a just and peaceful election in Burma. Our prayers had been answered, but the journey has only just begun.

We said goodbye to our friends Zaw Tun and his father Win Maung, both now Australian citizens having been forced to flee persecution under the old regime. We were so happy to be with them and share this momentous occasion.

"We will celebrate in our hearts today. We can celebrate on the streets another day," said Win Maung.

Please keep the people of Burma in your prayers.



Anne and Tony Stokle stand beside a huge poster supporting Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy.



Children at the closing Mass.



More Than Dance workshop.

Faithful to visit home in India that offers a lifeline to poor and sick

BUILDING on the past fifteen years of dedicated works of mercy, supporting the needy people in the Diocese of Kadapa, South India, Fr Jeff Dodds and Mary Skaag embrace the coming Year of Mercy by travelling once again to Balamma Satram, Holy Family Home in India.

Through the appeals and talks that they have given in the churches and the schools in the North East, thousands of pounds have been raised to build up this Holy Family Home.

It provides a home to

many old people who have lost the will to live through being abandoned, and the children who go hungry every day, not only for food, but for the education that they need to take them out of a life of poverty.

The word Satram means Inn, and at Balamma Satram the parable of the Good Samaritan is made tangible because the charity does not differentiate between caste, religion or culture. A safe home is given to all those who need it.

On January 4, 2016, two Sixth Form students, Hannah and Emily Green, from

St Thomas More Secondary School in Blydon, will be joining Fr Jeff and Mary on their visit to rural India.

As well as seeing the fruits of the fundraising done by the school over the last few years, raising in excess of £7,500 Emily and Hannah will be able to give a personal account to the school on the current activities at the home, namely the building of a new annex to the hospital unit.

They will also be able to give witness to the educational opportunities which is available, meet the young girls who have been saved from arranged marriages as well as all the aged people who live in the home.

Supporting Balamma Satram over the last eighteen months is the Parish of The Holy Family at Newton Aycliffe and Shildon.

When Fr Michael Whalen became parish priest in 2013, he introduced the charity to his parishioners.

The Justice and Peace Group, guided by Maureen



□ Above, Hannah Green, Mary Skaag, Fr Jeff and Emily Green. Below, celebrating 30 years of Ordination to the Priesthood Fr Seamus, Mary, Fr Jeff, Fr Michael and Joyce Martin.



Osborne, have supported the charity by creating sponsored events and raised over £6,000.

Joyce McCartin, a parishioner from Newton Aycliffe raised over £1,500 through a personal fundraiser at her home and Joyce has also been responsible for selling the Charity Calendars, raising another £1,000.

In November Fr Jeff and Mary joined Fr Michael and his parishioners to celebrate 30 years of his priesthood, all monetary gifts were in aid of our Bal-

amma Satram Charity.

If you would like to make a donation please contact: Fr Jeff Dodds, St Mary's Presbytery, Malvern Gardens, Lobley Hill, Gateshead. NE11 9LL. Telephone (0191) 460 4274. Email jeffrey-dodds@icloud.com or Mrs Mary Skaag, Balamma Satram, Registered Address: 6, Fivefield Road, Coventry. CV7 8JE. All cheques made payable to Balamma Satram. Check out the projects website at: www.sharingourlove.org.uk



□ The new hospital unit being built.

A year of celebration

THE Roman Catholic mission at Minsteracres began in 1765 with the Rev William Gibson, resident chaplain and tutor to the Silvertop family.

This autumn saw a flurry of events to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the mission, culminating with a weekend to mark the saint's day in November of St Elizabeth of Hungary, to whom the church at Minsteracres is dedicated.

Tyne Valley chamber choir, Antiphon, thrilled visitors with an a Capella

concert of early and late church music on the Saturday, and again at vespers on Sunday.

Mass was celebrated by Bishop Seamus Cunningham, who went on to bless a new garden outside the church. The garden was designed and built by another parishioner, Rosaleen Doonan, in the shape of St Cuthbert's cross, with a water fountain at its centre. Rosaleen has toiled throughout the year in all weather, sometimes assisted by husband Kevin

and other volunteers, to create a space of calm and beauty.

The day before, another parishioner, Katie Mooney, held a birthday party for the children with jelly and ice cream, games and a cake, the youngest participant being just ten weeks old.

As Sr Therese O'Regan, one of the resident community at Minsteracres, said of the weekend: "Flowers, music, food, people – everyone was provided for in a kaleidoscope of festivities." - Nuala O'Brien



□ Children of the parish have a great time at the birthday party.

Debating the question of ethics

by Patricia Egerton

SO how do we decide? Why do controversies arise so often in matters of human morality?

Bro Robert Moore OH, a Brother of St John of God based in Darlington, gave a stimulating talk recently to the Cleveland Newman Circle on the subject of 'Ethics', where he aimed to provoke thought, not provide answers.

Many ethical issues are met daily, while others, like the Chinese/Italian proposal to perform a human head transplant, are extreme: none should be avoided.

We mostly know 'right' from 'wrong' instinctively, but sometimes the difference is unclear.

If something is right for you, is it necessarily right for me? Is stealing always wrong? Is abortion as wrong as killing an adult? Can lying ever be justified? To save many people, could I actively allow one person to be hurt?

There are many challenging scenarios like these, so how do we decide?

The old penny catechism stated that God made us 'to be happy' yet we cannot agree on what promotes happiness.

Bro Robert explained there are no such things as universal ethical laws since principles can conflict. He mentioned five theories (all inadequate).

'Relativism' maintains all judgements are equally valid; abortion could be right for you but wrong for



□ Bro Robert Moore OH

me. 'Divine Command theory' says God made the rules; but there is no general belief in God.

The philosopher Kant based theories on 'practical reason' and 'duty', but omitted the consequences of actions.

In Utilitarian theory, ethical actions maximise 'the good' for the greatest num-

ber; this could justify torture.

Social Contract theory supposes that everyone has 'a contract' with Society, agreeing to abide by laws in exchange for protection; but laws can be unjust.

What is the Church's approach? It bases its social teaching on Scripture and a tradition including encyclicals from Rerum Novarum to Laudato Si.

The Church has a clear stance on human dignity and on the stability of marriage, but even here conflicting principles can lead to controversy.

How is the sacredness of human life upheld if the foetus does threaten the mother's life, or a State promotes capital punishment? How is human dignity upheld when someone

intractable pain is surely dying? How is the high priority of family life maintained when marriages die, or couples embark on irregular unions, or they decide to use 'family planning'?

The answers are not always clear. Hopefully, as Newman desired, lay people are learning to make mature decisions and Bro Robert emphasised that decision making cannot exclude emotions. Overall we should trust in our merciful God, who judges us by our intentions.

For information about the Cleveland Newman Circle contact Judith Brown on 01642-814977 or email tpj.egerton@virgin.net. Talks are on Wednesdays, at 7.45pm in Middlesbrough Cathedral Hall. All welcome.

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Flying the flag for Apostleship of the Sea

FRANK Barrett, a parishioner of St Bede's Church, Newcastle, and Apostleship of the Sea parish contact has retired as the charity's national Standard Bearer after eight years.

Frank, 84, has literally been flying the flag for the Apostleship (AoS) at the Annual National Service for Seafarers since 2007 and also at the AoS pilgrimages to Holy Island. Frank's final call of duty

was at this year's Annual National Service at St Paul's Cathedral, London on October 14. Needless to say he did a sterling job and was delighted to represent AoS, albeit for the last time.

Frank was given a fond farewell by the AoS team at its head office at the Catholic Bishops Conference of England & Wales office the next day. Mass was dedicated to Frank and AoS Tees & Hartlepool ship visitor Brenda Bland, who was also present.

After Mass, Frank and Brenda were treated to coffee, pastries and fruit for breakfast. AoS National Director Martin Foley presented Frank with a framed print of the AoS icon, Our Lady, Stella Maris.

Frank said: "AoS has been a great part of my life and I have made many friends throughout the association. I was greatly honoured when asked by then

AoS National Director Chris York to be national standard bearer and also to work alongside former Tees & Hartlepool port chaplain Tony McAvoy."

Besides being former Standard Bearer, Frank is also an active AoS parish contact since 2003. He will stand down in December. He has been instrumental in the work of AoS, supporting seafarers, giving talks at parishes, organising knitting groups, helping raise funds and recruiting new parish contacts and ship visitors.

Frank also served in the Royal Navy for many years.

AoS is the maritime agency of the Catholic Church and provides pastoral and practical support to seafarers arriving at ports in Great Britain.

More information about its ministry can be found at www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk.



□ Martin Foley, AoS National Director, presents Frank Barrett with a framed print of the icon Stella Maris in the AoS head office.



□ Frank Barrett (foreground) at the Annual National Service for Seafarers in St Paul's Cathedral.

Royal date with golden touch for Anna

AN Air Training Corps officer and member of St Joseph's parish, Stanley, has received a top award at a glittering Royal presentation in London.

Cadet Warrant Officer Anna Louise Welsh was presented with her Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award at St James's Palace from Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman, in the company of HRH the Earl of Wessex.

Anna is also an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist at St Joseph's and was an altar server for many years.

She attended 1409 Consett Squadron ATC, where she achieved her Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

The Gold Award Presentation was a celebration and recognition of Anna's achievements in completing her Duke of Edinburgh programme.

She worked through the five sections of her DofE programme over a number of months to achieve her Gold Award and her diverse activities included the following:

1 Physical: horse riding to improve her standards and techniques in this sport.

1 Skills: rock climbing, to learn more skilful techniques.

1 Volunteering: teaching the younger cadets on the squadron, so her knowledge and experience could be passed on to them.

1 Expedition: participating in an expedition in the Cheviots, pushing herself mentally and physically to the limit.



□ Anna Welsh proudly shows her Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

1 Residential: she joined the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes to aid sick pilgrims on their spiritual journey and give something back to the community.

Throughout her DofE, Anna was able to prove herself to be a great team leader, decision maker, compassionate helper and patient teacher.

Anna said of her experience: "It's a truly rewarding experience and one that I will look back on for the rest of my life. Just knowing that all I have achieved

has allowed me to give back to a community and inspire some of the next generation of air cadets to take up the challenge of achieving their gold award is a reward in itself."

These experiences show what an impact doing your DofE can have, and can develop the skills needed for life. Anna's Gold Award helped to earn her Lord Lieutenant Cadet for Durham and secure her place at Manchester University to study Mathematics.

Top French honour for modest hero of Normandy landings

SIXTEEN North East veterans from World War Two were presented with France's highest military honour during the Festival of Remembrance concert at Durham Cathedral on November 7

The Legion d'Honneur medal presentation was a highlight of concert, which included a muster parade, performances by military, emergency service and community bands and choirs, a poetry reading from a young local school pupil and the famous poppy drop from the cathedral tower.

One of the veterans to receive the medal was George Cunningham, of Our Lady of the Rosary parish, Shotley Bridge.

George, now in his nineties, was awarded for his service at the Normandy landings as a young 19-year-old seaman.

A quiet, modest man, George was one of the orig-



□ George in his Royal Navy service days.

inal parishioners who helped to establish Our Lady of the Rosary as a separate parish in the early 1950s, clearing the site for the building of the church, helping with the actual building, and continuing for many, many years afterwards to maintain and care for the church and its grounds.

Well done, George! Shotley Bridge parish is proud of you.



□ George Cunningham proudly shows his Legion d'Honneur medal, among others he has received.

Retreat centre dates

THE following retreats and events are planned for Minsteracres Retreat Centre in the New Year.

Life in the Psalms - Patrick Woodhouse. Contemporary meaning in ancient texts: a study day exploring how the ancient texts of the psalms can be re-imagined so that they speak to our contemporary secular world. Life in the psalms is the Mowbray Lent book for 2016. Saturday, 23 January, 10 am - 4 pm.

Friends of Minsteracres - Minsteracres team. A retreat for friends of Minsteracres at the start of the new season. Friday-Sunday, 12-14 February.

Walking retreat - Minsteracres team. Enjoy a walk of seven to ten miles through the countryside. Please bring a packed lunch. Wednesday, 17 February, 10am - 5pm.

For more information call 01434 673248 or go to www.minsteracres.org.



A group of young children at St William's Church, Darlington, took part in a Mini Vinnies commissioning liturgy led by Michael Willcock from the SVP on Sunday, November 15.

The children (left) are full of exciting ideas and are very keen to help others in their community. This is the second parish-based group in the diocese.

- Dominic Colley.



□ The spectacular light show at the Christmas Story celebration at St William's, Darlington.

Light up Christmas

COME along to St William's Church, Darlington, on Sunday, December 20, for the perfect start to Christmas.

For the past five years we have had our Carol Service and Christmas Story presented to us by our Liturgy children.

We wanted to be different, so we decided to light up our church. Each year it has

grown and is now a spectacular service with an amazing multicolour light show thanks to two local production companies who give their time and equipment free of charge.

We look forward to celebrating Christmas with you at 4pm on December 20. - Anne Robinson

A fond farewell to caring Fr Campion



□ Fr Campion says Mass at St Cuthberts Care.

by Moira Ashman

ST Cuthberts Care said a fond farewell to Fr Michael Campion, parish priest of Holy Name, Jesmond, as he retired from the charity's Board as Trustee and Chairman.

Fr Campion gave 15 years of dedicated service.

Moira Ashman, Chief Executive, commented: "It has been a pleasure to have worked alongside Fr Campion throughout his association with our charity.

"We couldn't have wished for a more committed, supportive, active and effective Chair. Fr Campion's guidance and acute understanding of our work and its sensitivities have served us well and we wish him all the very best as he retires from his boardroom duties."

Fr Campion added: "It has been a privilege to be formally involved with the work of St Cuthberts Care. In fact, it has been a major highlight of my work as a priest.

"In its outstanding work for some of the most vulnerable people in the region, St Cuthberts Care is the merciful face of our diocese as it turns the concerns and good intentions of the region's Catholics into solid, practical help for those who need it.

"As we enter the Year of Mercy and respond to the call to be merciful, I commend the work of the charity to everyone in the diocese and wish its management and staff every continued blessing."

The charity has appointed Fr Dermott Donnelly, Dean of St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle, as Chair and Trustee with effect from 1 November 2015.

Parishioners aid refugees

THE parishioners of St John Fisher Church, Sedgefield, showed their support for the plight of migrants and refugees by hosting a Refugee Fundraising Day.

The idea, of parishioner Kristen Peacock was to target three particular charities - the Red Cross Syria Appeal, Embrace Middle East Mattress Appeal and the Calais Refugees.

Invitations were issued to drop by for a cake and cuppa, to light a candle and to donate men's clothing.

The response, from all sectors of the community in Sedgefield, was tremendous. The cakes donated would have graced any 'Bake Off' tent and raised a mouth-watering £550.



□ Helpers sift through dozens of sacks of clothing donated in Sedgefield to help refugees.

The £180 paid to light candles will provide 15 mattresses for those desperately in need. Many sacks of warm, good quality clothing we were able to send to Calais to help stave

off the winter cold. The church had a steady stream of people throughout the day, all wanting to support, to share and to show love for those most in need. What was gratifying was to

see many young parishioners joining in, giving their time so generously.

Events concluded with a prayer service led by Fr Barrie McKenzie.

- Elsie McGowan

Is this prayer group a first?

HOLY FAMILY parish, Hartlepool has taken a quiet step into a new form of prayer meeting.

The Quaker-style afternoon gathering at the town's Hutton Avenue convent run by the fcJ (Faithful Companions of Jesus) is originally for the Catholic deanery and may be a first for Hexham & Newcastle diocese.

Northern Cross would be glad to learn of any similar experiment.

Seven people initiated the first

prayer meeting on Wednesday, November 18, including two Quakers, Lorna Jones and organiser Michael Piercy, who initiated discussions with clergy and a group of Catholics.

Because this is a new venture, Lorna unusually introduced the session, explaining the Quaker approach to silence, reaching it, and praying silently.

The 30-minute silence ended with a traditional handshake between two 'elders'.

Over a cup of tea afterwards,

members shared news and their response to the new experience.

Sister Kate Frost, fcJ, spoke about Ignatian prayer and other forms of prayer-sharing and retreats.

The group agreed to meet each Thursday at 1.45pm for 2pm at 55 Hutton Avenue, Hartlepool for half-an-hour of silent prayer. All are welcome.

For further information, please contact Michael Piercy on 01429-284694 or (mobile) 07785-788835.

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The Tablet 175th Anniversary Conference: The Spirit of Catholic Renewal: Signs, Sources and Calling

Raising 'the courage to enter the song'

A conference sketch by John Bailey

A CONSERVATIVE estimate of the content of 60 spoken lectures delivered during Ushaw's three-day conference – with questions and answers added – would be a quarter of a million words.

That's a lot of reading, let alone a lot to take in.

For some of us unused to the language of theology debate, it passed right over the head. This observer has no shame admitting that. It proved, in fact, a source of inspiration, grappling with new concepts. A bit like faith itself, you might say.

So, it was a brilliant aid to focussing on memorable ideas voiced during the 50-hour stay in Durham when Prof Karen Kilby voiced her one-liners during the final session.

Karen, Bede Professor of Catholic Theology at Durham University, called them her "stand-out moments" and listed three for her audience.

Her first was the image of erudite US theologian, emeritus Prof Stanley Hauerwas from Duke University, delivering Monday night's keynote lecture in the Calman Learning Centre – his notes perched on top of an upturned wastepaper bin beneath the microphone.

Secondly, writer and Tablet columnist Clifford Longley's appeal to Dr Alana Harris from Kings College, London, to say something encouraging for Catholic grandparents watching some of their children and grandchildren growing dimmer in the faith and more distant from the Church.

Thirdly, Prof Eamon Duffy's description that morning, capturing an image of Pope Francis pressing "the re-set button" on Vatican II for the Church in the 21st Century.

This reporter's notebook is stuffed with Ushaw standout moments, as Prof Kilby would describe them. Read on . . .



□ BISHOP Séamus Cunningham (left) greets a conference member at the start of the final morning. The Bishop was present throughout conference. He led the opening prayer on the first day, took part in Vespers at the back of Ushaw's college chapel while Church of England Bishop John Slack led the evening prayer and attended the short papers seminars on Day 2.



□ Professor Stanley Hauerwas delivering his keynote address, notes perched on a wastepaper bin.

the Centre for Catholic Studies conference programme, viz. "Coaches depart for Durham City for uncatered delegates".

● Protestants are for Catholics, canaries in the coal mine – a fascinating image offered by Prof Stanley Hauerwas. He explained: "I do think that Protestants have something to say to our Catholic brothers and sisters. That means we can at least be your experimental subjects through which you learn not to make our mistakes."

● The graphic description Cryogenic Church used by Prof Janet Soskice, responding to Cardinal Kasper's lecture on Tuesday night: suitable for storing at low temperatures, perhaps ... sleeping to be brought to life later, a la Disney? You interpret.

● An unexpected later quip from Prof Janet: "Moses was up on the mountain, receiving the first edition of The Tablet."

● 'The wasp at the picnic' – a metaphor used by Tablet literary editor Brendan Walsh, referring to Church perceptions of the famous weekly's usual role, during his vote of thanks.

● Joining the memorial lecture panel on Tuesday night to accept questions from the floor, Hexham & Newcastle's Fr Tony Currer, now in Rome, represented the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity – a rather more serious hat than the one he wore on the previous Sunday commenting for BBC Radio 4 news on the Vatican St Peter's Cricket Club's win over the Archbishop of Canterbury's XI.

That it? By no means – there was enough content and notes to fill pages for 12 months.

Thorough organisation by Durham University's Centre for Catholic Studies and the community of readers of The Tablet brought together 300 people who like to think about their religion. The resulting successful conference on Catholic renewal at Ushaw College identified a range of touchstones.

Here BRID FITZPATRICK, VERONICA WHITTY and JOHN BAILEY reflect, comment and report for Northern Cross on a highly stimulating three days at the beginning of November.

Continue the conversation to build on conference success

by John Bailey

DURHAM University's Centre for Catholic Studies will still be reviewing results of November's Ushaw conference on Catholic renewal.

Meanwhile, conference-goers can report the symposium's achievement was impressive, bringing great credit on Ushaw, on the University and Centre for Catholic Studies' director Paul Murray and his talented team.

Complete strangers from all parts of Britain – and abroad – left Ushaw's campus with a feeling they had just joined a club, or attended a reunion. Many probably said they'd keep in touch.

In fact, they were probably sharing a sense of 'church' – part of the same Church, but not necessarily the same tradition. They had something else in common, most were Tablet readers – "Tabletistas" Prof Eamon Duffy called them, coining a word for left-leaning thinkers on the liberal-progressive wing.



□ The final plenary session in Ushaw's theatre with Dr Susan O'Brien at the rostrum introducing panel members.

There was definitely a feeling of hope in the air.

From the ideas and expressions of intent expressed during the final session, the act of corporate listening and sharing during November 2 to 4 had produced an air of optimism.

There is little doubt the three days succeeded on participation, organisation, sponsorship, time-keeping and catering.

Perhaps the most striking proof of well-organised harmony among so many people was Tuesday afternoon's grid of short papers spread through the old col-

lege building.

Some 300 'delegates' were free to roam between nine ground floor rooms with five time slots – and it worked.

Conference-goers mapped their route and found their favourite topics without disruption or complaint.

Sharing food worked in the same way – booked lunches and dinners, or casual eating in Ushaw pop-up café or in Durham city pubs – bridging barriers, forging friendships.

Readers can gauge from the content of these two

Cross pages that the experiment worked, brought surprises and broke new ideas to create a sense of hope.

This was less an emotional experience than an intellectual melting pot. For the most part, participants were generous with each other – in patience, understanding and questioning.

Just thrice, a jarring note of criticism risked bursting this bubble of harmony, but good humour reigned. Fr Timothy Radcliffe advised: "Heartfelt words should be the start of conversation and not the end."

THE BISHOP KEVIN DUNN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Ecumenism: mutual respect in the gospel of mercy – Cardinal

by John Bailey

BISHOP Kevin Dunn was a jolly person who enjoyed a sense of fun – an engaging, kindly and modest priest.

He would have been elated, sitting in on a lecture that bore his name with nothing less than a cardinal presenting it.

For, had the late Bishop Kevin been with us, he might have enjoyed immensely the freedom to relax completely listening to a Cardinal's lecture without the prelate being there.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, former President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, due at Ushaw hot-foot from the Synod on the family in Rome, was taken ill and sent his apologies.

However, Cambridge Professor Eamon Duffy gallantly took on the task for him and read the lecture beautifully.

Conference organisers asked Fr Timothy Radcliffe, former Master of the Dominicans and latterly Director of the Las Casas Institute at Blackfriars, Oxford, to chair the session. The Arnold Wolfendale



□ Cardinal Walter Kasper

Picture courtesy of Centre for Catholic Studies website.

lecture theatre in Durham University's Calman Learning Centre was packed with 300 guests high on theology.

Cardinal Kasper was chosen by the late Pope John Paul II as a counterbalance to Cardinal Ratzinger, which signalled the Pope's belief in the importance of debate.

Eamon Duffy, Professor of History, former President of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and author of *The Stripping of the Altars*, which had done so much to revise thinking about the Reformation and

"telling the history of our country".

The Cardinal's topic – Church, Mercy and the Signs of the Times – slotted into the conference theme of Catholic Renewal. But he reminded the audience of the importance of ecumenism.

"The 20th Century brought a good deal of progress and aroused great hopes, but in the 21st Century, by contrast, clear signs of fatigue have become apparent," he said.

It doesn't seem spring-time in the ecumenical movement, more like autumn or even winter. "But even in winter the seed grows ... We need to start anew," said the Cardinal.

He recalled his previous visit to Ushaw (January 2006) and "this beautiful old city of Durham and in this famous university" he was happy to build on his earlier conversations about ecumenism.

In the context of the 50th anniversary of the closing ceremony of Vatican II in 1965, the Cardinal concluded that "with the current pontificate" a new phase of ecumenism has begun.

Expressed in words John XXIII might have used, this could be "a new leap forward" ... with "the medicine of mercy our time urgently needs".

He didn't seek to outline a complete future for ecumenism – that was for a younger generation of theologians – but to offer some elements of a new vision of ecumenism oriented towards the gospel of mercy.

The Council was only "the beginning of a beginning".

The response was provided by Professor Janet Soskice, of Cambridge University.

Prof Soskice thanked Bishop John Slack, assistant Bishop of Portsmouth and former representative to the Holy See of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Church of England, on behalf of conference, for the great debt owed them in the ecumenical movement.

She, Fr Radcliffe and Prof Duffy were joined by Hexham & Newcastle's Fr Tony Currer, now in Rome, representing the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, to take questions.

The Tablet 175th Anniversary Conference: The Spirit of Catholic Renewal: Signs, Sources, and Calling

Striking speakers emphasise need for Christian perspective

Conference sketch by Brid Fitzpatrick

I HADN'T expected to find myself at The Tablet's anniversary conference. By the time I'd decided that yes, given such an array of great speakers, I ought to go and listen, it was fully booked.

I joined the waiting list but put it out of my mind. So it was a delightful surprise, just two weeks beforehand, to get an email to say they'd had a cancellation and did I want to come? A quick phone call to my father in Belfast - who'd also been interested - and we booked on.

And what a conference it was. The opening panel had three speakers, Discerning the Catholic Moment: Reading the Signs of the Times. Perhaps one of the signs of the times was that all three speakers were women, as was the chair.

The presentations were lively and interesting and my favourite killer quote came from Prof Myriam Wijlens, a canon lawyer who's based in Germany.

She talked of meeting a bishop who told her he'd decided to dispense with the Diocesan Pastoral Council. She asked him if he carried out confirmations in his diocese, which of course he did and very much enjoyed doing.

Then she asked him if he believed the Holy Spirit was at work in the people he confirmed? What could he do but assent?

And how could he then answer her question about how this working of the Holy Spirit was to be made manifest if there was no

way for him to hear the voice of his people?

Needless to say the Diocesan Pastoral Council was revived, and he went on to have a fruitful relationship with it.

The speakers on Tuesday morning were also striking. Dr Anna Rowlands, from Durham University, talked of a Catholic response to the current refugee crisis.

She cautioned us against being pulled into the popular view of good and bad refugees - the good refugees being the ones who wait patiently in the refugee camps of Jordan and Lebanon, the bad refugees being those who risk their lives and their families to get to Europe. Or the good refugees being the people who are fleeing from war in Syria, while the bad refugees are fleeing absolute poverty, the 'economic migrants'.

If we're going to exercise the preferential option for the poor, shouldn't we be taking the migrants who are destitute and unskilled, at the bottom of the heap?

She wasn't proposing political solutions, just calling us to bring a Christian perspective to bear when ad-

All the Masses and liturgies were beautifully done but the Compline in St Cuthbert's Church on the Tuesday evening stands out in memory. It began like the Easter vigil Mass, in a darkened church with candles being lit from the Paschal candle and lights spreading down the aisle.

● Brid Fitzpatrick works for the BBC in the North East.



□ A GLOWING tribute was paid to Centre for Catholic Studies administrator Theresa Phillips (centre) for her work co-ordinating the Ushaw programme and papers, by the Centre's director Prof Paul Murray. The Centre's Bede Professor of Catholic Theology, Karen Kilby, joined in the tribute for the picture.

At the close of conference, Prof Murray also paid tribute to Greg and his team of eight post-graduate students for their help directing visitors during conference. Each received a copy of Prof Eamon Duffy's latest book.

Lively, outspoken and refreshing

Conference sketch by Veronica Whitty

NO MATTER how academic a conference may be, there are always lighter moments.

Morning prayer with scriptural meditation by David McLoughlin, of Newman University, Birmingham provided such a moment.

Our view of the Virgin Mary and the angel Gabriel was changed forever when this senior lecturer in theology told us that the Angel Gabriel's first salutation to Mary should be correctly translated as "Hello, beautiful".

The Tablet conference was indeed academic and I struggled with understanding some of the papers but it was worth the effort. Many voices and comments were heard.

There were questions and statements following every paper presented. This liveliness and outspokenness was refreshing and often exhilarating, whether you agreed with the speaker or not.

One metaphor for the Church was repeated several times: "Moving water remains fresh whereas standing water stagnates." People at this conference wanted the Church to move forward.

The Dominican, Timothy Radcliffe, said Pope Francis wants a messy Church, where many initiatives are started. He wanted 'things messy' which can then be cleared up.

Fr Radcliffe said the institutional Church needed more flexibility and new institutions along the lines of L'Arche and Cafod. He said a Laity Council should discuss issues.

There were signs that this was happening, for exam-

Call for support

AN appeal to support print journalism came near the end of the Ushaw conference.

It was voiced by Prof Paul Murray, Director of the Centre for Catholic Studies, while thanking conference sponsor The Tablet.

Print journalism is under severe threat, he told a packed Ushaw theatre during the final session, and he asked those present to take out subscriptions.

ple, annulments nowadays had two lay people on the panel - a woman and a man, plus a permanent deacon and not three priests as before.

Lay women theologians were much in evidence at this conference. At the first session there were three lay women theologians, including a canon lawyer covering various aspects of contemporary Catholic cultural movements.

They were Dr Alana Harris from Kings College,

London; Prof Tina Beattie from Roehampton University and Prof Myriam Wijlens from Erfurt University, Germany, a canon lawyer.

Prof Mijlens, a consultant/advisor since 1994 to the Conference of Major Superiors and Conference of Bishops in the Netherlands, made, for me, the most outstanding contribution to the conference. She was clear, direct and could illustrate what she meant with appropriate stories.

The way Canon Law is applied takes the individual into account, she said.

Prof Stanley Hauerwas, son of a bricklayer from Texas, introduced himself as a Methodist disguised as an Episcopalian.

He said the Catholic Church reminds us that there is an alternative way of doing things, for example care of the mentally handicapped, shown by Jean Vanier.

I felt the best delivered paper was by Dr Agbonkhi-anmeghe Orobator, a Nigerian Jesuit who spoke

on "An African Perspective on Globalisation, Poverty and the Call to Serve the Common Good."

Sr Dr Ethna Regan, of the Mater Dei Institute, Dublin, She spoke about putting our house in order. What is needed is the just ordering of the Church before it can speak to society.

There were many workshops to choose from and I would pick out the one run by Prof Maeve Heaney. "The sacramental nature of artistic creativity", with the theme that art enriches human experience.



Photo of Estelle White © Martin Kinlen.

In a rare interview, Estelle White talks in a lively, humorous way, to Fr John Skivington while on a visit back to her home-town of South Shields on Tyneside. Fr John was parish priest at St Gregory's Roman Catholic church from 1978-91. This performance was recorded circa 1981. Estelle White helped to chose the seven hymns heard in this performance.

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□ Above, Bishop Seamus Cunningham blesses the new garden. Left, Roseleen and Kevin Doonan in the newly-restored St Cuthbert's garden, at Minsteracres.

Bishop Seamus blesses Rosaleen's inspirational and glorious garden

by Nuala O'Brien

VISITORS to Minsteracres this year will have been aware of work going on to the side of the church.

The final project was revealed in November when Bishop Seamus Cunningham blessed the new St Cuthbert's garden.

The design and labour are all down to the inspiration and hard work of parishioner Rosaleen Doonan, though it did not begin quite as she had anticipated.

"I had noticed that the garden at the side of the church was dark

and overgrown," she said. "One day I wandered in and found an old rockery. I went to Sr Therese and offered to renovate it."

As far as Sr Therese was concerned, the offer could not have been better timed.

"The overgrown laurels around the rockery were due to come down, and some people were quite upset about it. What we needed was a complete overhaul," she said.

A little surprised that the request for a bit of TLC had turned into a major project, Rosaleen set about designing the new garden.

"I had been toying with the idea

of a cross, and St Cuthbert's cross just came naturally."

The rest may not have been quite so easy. "It has taught me a lot of lessons, especially patience. But every time I hit a problem, something would turn up.

"I very quickly realised I didn't have the strength to do the heavy lifting. But, when I needed to get rid of the soil we'd removed, one of the workmen on site took it away. When I needed help to lay the gravel, Radek and Arek, two men visiting from a Passionist monastery in Poland, and another young Polish visitor did the heavy work. Even the funding

was provided by a parishioner.

"The conservation volunteers dug out the old trees, and Minsteracres' groundsman Tony Bramley was brilliant. He helped me all the way along."

Rosaleen's husband, architect Kevin Doonan, drew up the plans and they were shown to the parishioners.

"When they saw the designs, the parishioners really got on board," said Sr Therese. "It captured people's imagination once they saw what was happening.

"It has opened up a dark, damp corner and it's just beautiful to see as you drive in. I love the way

the water flows over the stone in the centre, and the sound it makes. It's a lovely place to sit, to reflect and to pray," said Sr Therese.

That sentiment echoes the way Rosaleen approached the project. "In a sense, it has been a prayer," she said.

"While I was building it, I did what Fr Mark does. I sat there long enough for an answer to come to whatever problem I had faced.

"If the garden gives anyone sitting in it peace, or the answer to their problems, I'm happy."

Beautiful Gosforth church is true gem

by Helen Watson

FRANK McCombie painted such a vivid and inspiring picture of St Charles', Gosforth at this month's North East Catholic History Society, that many came away thinking "I must see that again".

The audience were treated to an informative and highly entertaining talk on The History of St Charles' Church, Gosforth.

The research and knowledge that Mr McCombie showed, combined with his passion for the church, left us all with food for thought regarding our own parish churches and their futures.

We learned of the challenges earlier parish priests faced in building a church to serve Coxlodge and South Gosforth, of its development from a "tin chapel" to a "proper church". The architecture of the whole building, from the "twin towers and their spires" to the "marble, witheringly cold interior," was discussed, and the church's short-comings were also mentioned.

But, we were told, the crowning glory of St Charles' is its stained glass.

Mr McCombie spoke passionately of the work of Clark and Co. of Dublin who show in their art's originality and spiritual depth what liturgical stained glass is for. Even the glass which is not of such high artistic quality (the Apostle windows) is held in regard and affection by the parishioners, as was shown after two windows were vandalised and destroyed in 1979.

His aim was to speak of the history of the church rather than focus on its people, but as no church is built without characters, we were introduced to some formidable parish priests. Among them was Fr Bernard McElduff, who saw his job as preserving the fabric of his church and the liturgy by which it lived and functioned, and was not one who embraced change.

This was illustrated by his reaction to the Sacred Congregation of Rites' restoration of the Order of Holy Week in 1956. At the appointed time, the lights were switched off. The church was plunged into darkness. "Who did that?" bellowed Fr. McElduff, the long-suffering curate, Fr John O'Brien, admitted it was he, but was simply following the order from Rome. Fr McElduff's answer was: "That's alright for Rome, but this is Gosforth!"

The next meeting of the North East Catholic History Society is 2nd March 2016 at 2.15pm in St Andrew's Hall, Worswick Street, Newcastle. Dr James Hegarty will talk on World War I chaplains.

Share festive joy with people of Peru

by Joe Plumb

IT WAS good to spend time in the UK this autumn reporting back and at the same time raising funds for Peru Mission projects.

As well as a charity night with Cabaret provided by Alfie Joey and Hal Calbert (The Mimic-Men), during a six-week visit I presented the work of the Mission in eight parishes, nine schools and together with Chair of

Trustees, Tony Joy, met with North East businesses and charitable foundations.

The Mission serves the needs of the disadvantaged poor in Peru and develops educational, health and training projects which create opportunities and raise aspirations for those living in poverty. Another aspect of our work is the organisation of Gospel-based group visits, often by North East schools.

As Christmas approaches

we are striving to share some festive joy and, at the same time, offer some protection against malaria and dengue fever to families in the Peruvian Amazon.

We want to donate 120 mosquito-nets, 120 small panetones and Christmas presents for children to a group of Missionary Sisters of the Child Jesus of Prague, who live on the Peruvian border with Colombia, for them to distribute amongst the jungle com-

munities along the 1,200km of river which they serve. The boat journey to this jungle zone takes three days.

If anyone could assist us with a donation to share some Christmas joy with children and families in a very remote and poor part of God's world, please get in touch: joe28peru@hotmail.com or on our Facebook page: The Peru Mission.

This year's group of 25

sixth-formers and staff from St John's had a wonderful experience of life among the disadvantaged poor in both urban and rural jungle settings in Peru, when they visited.

To see how Amazon jungle-dweller's live, farm, source their water for drinking, cooking, cleaning and bathing, was an eye-opener.

The group spent time teaching English, maths, art, crafts and music in a girls' residential centre, joined a local parish for Mass, laid the floor of a community centre and classroom which on Sundays will be used as a chapel, painted a dining room/kitchen used by catechists and Christian animators of river communities and laid a pathway next to the Bread of Life Bakery project in Morona Cocha.

Next year, St John's hope to return to Independencia or another jungle community, to help with a classroom, meeting room or chapel construction.

A huge thanks to local feeder-parishes and the school community who year-on-year help the young people come to give so much of themselves and learn so much about themselves in Peru.

A group of 26 sixth-formers and staff from St John's,

A Christmas elf from Moldova

by John Bailey

LONG, tall and elegant Christmas elves – in distinctive white, red and black outfits – will be appearing under some North East Christmas trees this year.

They come from Moldova along with other more cuddly hand-crafted toys offered for sale at riveting talks about the country's dual problem combating trafficking of young people and sexual tourism to Moldova, the modern state in Eastern Europe bordered by Romania and the Ukraine.

Its capital city is Chisinau. A series of talks, sponsored by registered charity WorldShare, have been describing a scandal of traffic in women and girls, some as young as 12 years old, into the sex trade in Russia, the Middle East and especially Western Europe.

Many are lured into the net by

promises of a better life abroad but some are kidnapped. Others, it's alleged, even sold by their parents.

Members of Hartlepool Churches Together heard personal accounts of the work of a faith-based organisation called Beginning of Life, working in Moldova to rescue young people from the trade. Local man Geoff Law organised the Hartlepool talk.

Two leaders – Serghei Mihailov and Benjamin Sazonov – spoke for an hour to an audience in Hartlepool's Oxford Road Baptist Church. They set out sobering facts and figures about the scale of the problem and their hopeful work in schools and youth projects to change the culture and provide hope for potential victims.

Part of the mix of simple, direct remedies being tried by the group include a centre for victims, providing outpatient care for them, running a sewing shop, a psychological art studio, and starting a 'dream house' project to help prevent at-risk teenage girls falling for the temptations of the traffic trade.

The range of Christmas tree elves and animals – hand-made in cloth, cotton and stitching – give young women self-esteem through work and creativity, the two Moldovan speakers explained.

So, the cheerful elf with the eastern-European look appearing under some North East trees this Christmas will bring a prayer for a better life for someone and an uplift in prospects and self-esteem for a teenage craftworker in Moldova.



□ The cadets who entertained Claremont Terrace Lunch Club.

Cadets stage cracking show!

MEMBERS of the Claremont Terrace Lunch Club in Blyth were treated to a fabulous show of dancing and music at their weekly get-together recently.

The guests were a group of cadets, led by Major Eyton Parker, from Northumberland Church of England Academy (Coldstream Guards) Combined Cadet Force, Ashington.

The cadets taking part were Tom Barnes, Katie Moffat, Craig Warnes, Katie Dobson, Megan Edgar, Chardonnay Bourne, Katie Bradley and Leah Lang.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment and the cadets received such a warm welcome that they have asked if they can return in the future.

The Claremont Terrace Lunch Club meets in a hall owned by St Wilfrid's Church, Blyth, but welcomes people of all denominations and faiths.

It was established with the help of St Cuthberts Care and is run entirely by volunteers, offering friendship, entertainment and a good lunch to members and guests most Fridays of the year.



□ Members of the Claremont Terrace Lunch Club enjoying the show.

Bishops agree Crib Collection to aid Palestinian Christians

THE plight of the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land now forms part of the overall picture of reductions to the Christian presence in the Middle-East.

And now both Bishops of Hexham and Newcastle and Middlesbrough have agreed to support an Advent Crib Collection initiative in all parishes.

Leaflets explaining the work of the Friends of the Holy Land (FHL) will be available in all Churches and the funds raised will go 100% direct to assist Palestinian Christians.

It is hoped to establish parish groups across both dioceses to provide for a permanent support to the Palestinian Christians.

The FHL is looking for 'Ambassadors' to assist in promoting the aims of the charity through appeals from the pulpit and the formation of parish groups or to provide ongoing support.

Anyone with an interest in this role, or assistance in the formation of parish groups should please contact myself, the Regional Director at mcnallymxk@aol.com.

by Mark McNally

A comprehensive description of the FHL and its aims can be found on the website www.friendsofthe-holyland.org.uk

The Christian population in centres such as Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Nablus have felt the brunt of political and financial measures which have resulted in a reduction of the Christian presence to only 2% of the overall population from a figure of 47% in the mid-twentieth century.

The FHL is a non-political Christian Charity with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby and Cardinal Vincent Nichols as its main patrons.

It was formed in 2009 with the principal aims of raising an awareness to the challenges facing many Christians in the Holy Land, providing financial assistance to sustain the livelihood of those remaining Christians, to encourage parish pilgrimages to the Holy Land and in doing so, provide both moral and financial support and last but not least to promote the

practice of regular prayer for endangered Christian minorities in the region.

Truly, the surviving Palestinian Christians are 'the living stones' in the land where Jesus Christ was born, lived and preached the Gospel. To imagine the cradle of Christianity without a viable Christian presence is unthinkable, but this may become the reality unless steps are taken to promote and sustain a viable Christian presence in the region.

Current projects supported by the FHL include the provision of Water Cisterns to homes where water is rationed and only available 'on tap' every five days or so.

Also financial support is given to Christian schools where pupils from poor families are unable to pay the necessary fees, sponsorship of university places to Bethlehem University and the provision of housing and the necessary infrastructure in Beit Sahour, a suburb of Bethlehem that will allow young Palestinian Christians to remain and hopefully find employment.

Reflecting on changing face of Minsteracres

by Nuala O'Brien

THE death in October of Fr Luke Magee led to reflection on the changes that have taken place at Minsteracres over the years.

As former rector, Fr Mark White said of Fr Luke that he was a great innovator and one of the changes he made would seem unremarkable now, but was ground-breaking back in the mid-1970s.

Fr Luke brought three sisters of St Paul the Apostle to live and work at Minsteracres. Sr Dympna Smith, at just 37 the youngest of the three, remembers: "Minsteracres would have been the first place (of its kind) to have men and women working together. It was a huge step. Other men's congregations had tried it, but didn't succeed."

Other congregations, however, were not blessed with the foresight and determination of three such people as Sr Dympna, Fr Luke and Fr Mark Whelehan.

"Sister Mary Bridget and I in particular wanted to integrate. Some of the men were less happy though and they moved on quite quickly. The ones who stayed were on board with what we were doing," said Sr Dympna. "Fr Mark and Fr Luke were great progressives and were determined to make a go of retreats at Minsteracres."

And in the subsequent 27 years of her stay here that was exactly what they did, developing and running hugely successful parish and school retreats together and fundraising



□ Sr Dympna with Fr Luke.

through the famous summer fayres and other events.

Faced with grim times in the 1980s following the closure of the steel works in Consett, they worked with Andrew O'Connor, manager of the local Manpower Services Commission who set up job creation schemes for unemployed people, teaching them skills to get them back into work. "You would find four or five coaches coming up to bring people here. The place was buzzing. And Andrew O'Connor – what a man," she said.

The friendships forged through hard work have endured and during a recent visit Sr Dympna and Fr Mark met up with Margaret and Tracey Barnes, their first two volunteers, to reminisce.

Sr Dympna, a farmer's daughter from County Monaghan in Ireland, became the lynchpin of the volunteer service and many of Minsteracres

volunteers still recount stories of how they were recruited by her.

Even her own rural childhood didn't quite prepare her for conditions at Minsteracres, "It was really rural," she recalled. She arrived in the North East from a teaching job in Sunbury on Thames in Middlesex, to a stark contrast.

First there was the weather. "I remember going into Consett shortly after I arrived in December in a pair of flimsy shoes," she said. "When I got out of the car I simply couldn't stand up. The shoes were ruined."

Then there was Minsteracres itself "It was so bare." It is fair to say it lacked the feminine touch.

Reflecting on the changes on a recent visit, Sr Dympna said: "What strikes me is the space, the freedom, the care for the earth and the beauty of the place. It's a people's retreat house now – open to everyone. It began in my day, but it has almost exploded now."

"Everywhere you look you can see the commitment of people. I see it as a big, holistic centre: whoever you are, there's a welcome for you."

There is no doubt that Sr Dympna, Fr Mark, Fr Luke and others in the community laid the foundations for what you see today, and there are plenty who remember the hard work and love that went into creating it.

"On the day of Luke's funeral I didn't get to eat a bite until just as we were leaving – there were so many people to see and catch up with. It was amazing," she concluded.

Training and Recruitment Manager

Competitive salary and benefits

St Cuthberts Care is a well-established, fast-paced regional care charity, employing 350 people and supporting over 50 volunteers. We aim to recruit the best people for our work. To help us in this quest, we are seeking to recruit a dedicated Training and Recruitment Manager to review and overview the charity's recruitment process, from selection through to appointment.

This is a new position, reporting directly to the charity's Director of HR. This role is progressive and requires both vision and innovation. We require a highly experienced and engaging manager who will have worked at a senior level in recruitment and is capable of implementing new approaches.

The successful candidate will have a background in recruitment, HR or business. He or she must be able to work largely unsupervised and be familiar with recruitment, associated legislation and requirements specific to the care sector. The ability to develop a vision through to operation, will be essential.

There is an expectation for the post-holder to assume responsibility for the charity's training needs in due course and, at this stage, for this position to become part of the charity's senior management team.

Interested?

Visit our website: www.stcuthbertscarejobs.org.uk to apply on line or telephone 0191 2424808 for an application pack.

For more information, please ring Geraldine Martin, Director of HR on 0191 2280111.

Closing date for applications will be immediately after the first 10 applications. Interview date: Tuesday 16 February 2016. Anticipated start date: 1 April 2016.



St Cuthberts Care is a charity established by the Catholic Church in the North East of England.

Company Limited by Guarantee Company Registration No 1645917 Registered Charity No 512912





□ The South Tyneside pilgrims after Mass at one of the many chapels at the shrine of the Black Madonna.



□ Lighting a candle at the shrine to Pope St John Paul II in Wadowice.

Pilgrims visit emotive sites of hard toil, persecution, and the uplifting birthplace of a modern-day saint

A MIXED group of 25 adults, led by Fr Andrew Shaw from the South Shields cluster of parishes and his colleague Fr Stephen Parkinson, from the Diocese of Salford, enjoyed a busy programme during a pilgrimage to Poland at the end of October.

The group were blessed with warm autumn sunshine throughout their visit based in Krakow, which hosts World Youth Day in 2016, as they saw many of the sites included in the programme for next year's celebrations.

Pope St John Paul II was once Archbishop of Krakow and it proved to be a great pilgrimage destination for the South Shields group. On arrival they enjoyed a guided walking tour around the city which survived World War II virtually undamaged, and they discovered much of its charm and elegance and explored its colourful past as the ancient royal capital of Poland.

by Tom Fennelly

The largely unspoiled Old Town is now a World Heritage Site and the group visited the magnificent cathedral and enjoyed wonderful views of the River Vistula from imposing Wawel Castle. Fr Andrew and Fr Stephen celebrated a special Mass to mark the start of the pilgrimage in the Church of St Nicholas.

Next day it was down the salt mines for the pilgrims as they visited the Wieliczka mine complex known as "the underground salt cathedral of Poland." In 1978 it became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A wooden staircase with 378 steps provides access to the mine's 64-metre (210-foot) level. A three-kilometre (1.9-mile) tour features corridors, chapels, statues, and lake, 135 metres (443 ft) underground. Visitors return to the surface in a miners' cage which whisks them to the surface in 30 seconds.

There is an impressive chapel dedicated to St Kinga and a reception room that is used for private functions, including weddings. A chamber has walls carved by miners to resemble wood, as in wooden churches built in early centuries.

In the afternoon the group visited the Basilica of Divine Mercy, located south of the city centre. The modern 20th century church is the home of the Lord's Mercy Icon, a painting depicting Christ as he appeared before a Polish nun, Sr Faustina, in the 1930's.

They also visited the monastery of Jasna Gora in Czestochowa, home to the beloved and miraculous icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, also known as the Black Madonna.

The monastery is the national shrine of Poland and the centre of Polish Catholicism. The group had an in-

formative and at times amusing tour by Fr Simon, one of the Pauline monks.

The last full day was a very emotional day as the group went first to Auschwitz and Birkenau, the infamous concentration and death camp complex built by the Nazis about 40 kilometres from Krakow. Over one million people, mainly Jews, were killed there in the gas chambers and many other forms of brutality.

There followed a visit to Wadowice, birthplace and home of Pope St John Paul II, and after a tour of the new museum centred around his home, which is adjacent to his family church, the group took part in a Mass in Polish.

The pilgrimage ended with a final Mass in the church of St Nicholas before a tired but happy group enjoyed a final walk around Krakow before

jetting back to Tyneside.

Fr Stephen, who is Private Secretary to the Bishop of Salford, is a friend of Fr Andrew and he joined the pilgrimage to familiarise himself with the city in preparation for their diocesan group visit for World Youth Day 2016.

Up to two million people are expected to be at the Sanctuary of Pope St John Paul II, patron of World Youth Day, on "Campus Misericordiae", which borders his beloved Krakow and Wieliczka.

Young people will meet with Pope Francis during the Masses on Saturday and Sunday, July 30 and 31.

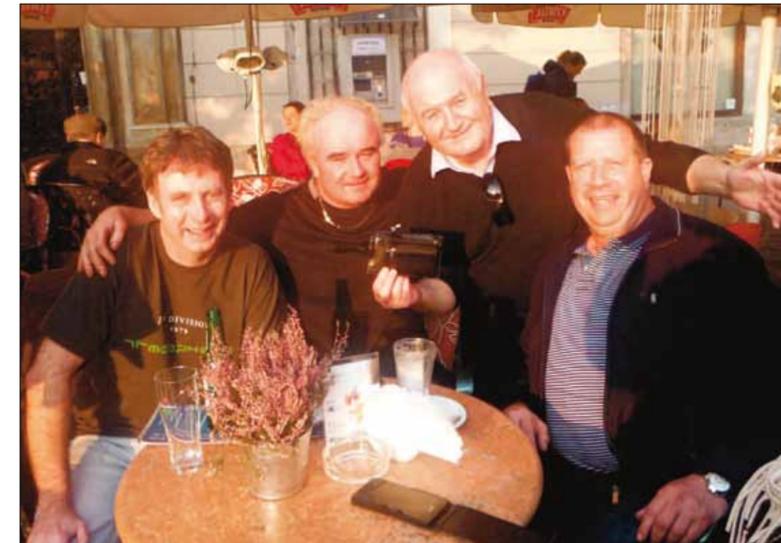
Fr Andrew, of Sts Peter and Paul, South Shields, said: "The whole pilgrimage was a very moving and meaningful experience for everyone. We had an excellent and very knowledgeable local guide, Kristina, who accompanied us throughout and gave us wonderful commentaries."



□ Fr Andrew Shaw (left) and Fr Stephen Parkinson concelebrated Mass at the English Church of St Nicholas in Krakow.



□ Polish national shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa, also known as The Black Madonna.



□ Tom Fennelly (third left) is reunited with his wallet, found by the three Irishmen from Kildare.

Heard the one about three Irishmen, a Geordie and a wallet? (. . . and it's all true!)

JUST before leaving at the end of our amazing Polish pilgrimage, the group from South Shields took advantage of a late departure to enjoy a last stroll around Krakow.

While walking across the Market Square with my wife Una and Frances Martin, I discovered that I had lost my wallet.

After retracing my steps back to the hotel, cancelling bank cards and reporting the loss to the police we resumed our

walk along the banks of the River Vistula heading for the Jewish quarter.

It was there, just as we neared Schindler's Factory, that I received an amazing telephone call from fellow Sts Peter & Paul parishioner Carol Halliday, who was at work in St Clare's Hospice, Jarrow. She asked if Una had lost a purse which had been found by an Irishman.

By a miracle, my wallet

had been found by a group of three Irishmen from Kildare and after one of them, Terry Boland, carried out numerous internet searches he discovered Una's links with St Clare's Hospice and rang their receptionist, Carol.

Absolute amazement and joy followed as I called Terry, who had just arrived in Krakow with two friends on a weekend break. After enjoying a fantastic lunch at a Jewish

restaurant we took an electric buggy taxi back to the square and met up with Terry, Barney O'Keefe and Seanie Flynn.

After quick celebratory drink and photos, we headed back to the hotel for the coach to the airport.

During the journey I shared my 'Miracle of Krakow' with my fellow pilgrims and thanked God for honest people and the perseverance and kindness of three great Irish lads.



□ Right - the statue of Pope St John Paul II outside the church next to his home in Wadowice.



□ Pauline monk Fr Simon speaks to the group at the monastery of Jasna Gora in Czestochowa.



□ The group at the infamous gates of Birkenau death camp.



□ The South Tyneside pilgrims enter the forbidding concentration camp at Auchwitz.

Northern Cross-word

Northern Cross-word 397

YOU are invited to complete the Northern Cross-Word number 397 for the chance of a cash prize for an all-correct entry.

The £10 prize will be awarded to the sender of the first all-correct entry opened after the post delivery on Thursday December 31.

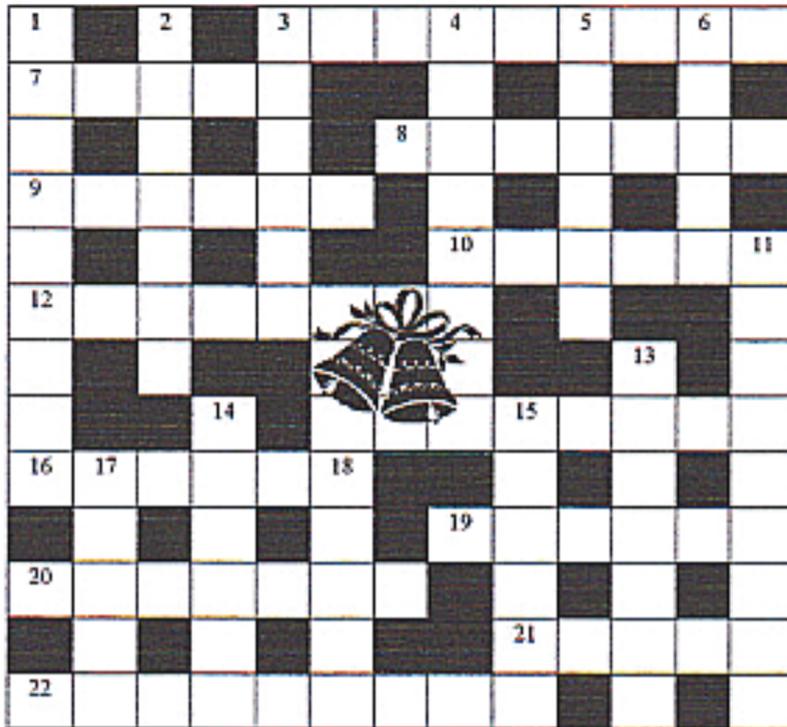
Prize Cross-Word entries should be clearly marked Northern Cross-Word 397 and sent to: Northern Cross, St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington, DL1 2 DR.

Across:

- 3. Garlanded with medals (9).
- 7. Place we hear for someone's belongings (5).
- 8. Once more the way comes close (7).
- 9. Hesitatingly I claim the fur (6).
- 10. Sounds like the sons that is the problem (6).
- 12. Looks after souls (5).
- 15. Way down perhaps to give (5).
- 16. Follow closely the show about these days (6).
- 19. Direct passage you hear (6).
- 20. Calm sort of sea (7).
- 21. Suffer bad cold in ruin (5).
- 22. Arrangement of lace is let in heavenly setting (9).

Down:

- 1. Boats with regatta starting show decorations (9).
- 2. What a mess Ron made of the church talks (7).
- 3. Spirits of December first at skating venues (6).
- 4. Instrument plays a human part (5).
- 5. Fifty one share bias against excuses (6).
- 6. Follow the Sun round from east to east (5).
- 11. Worn (4, 5).
- 13. Go forward for hand-out (7).
- 14. Counsel these days on wickedness (6).
- 15. Get in late by mistake to see what's involved (6).
- 17. Pull this way have a go (5).
- 18. Was it somehow your middle you are looking after? (5)



Name

Address

..... Postcode

The crossword is compiled by Peter Bew of Elwick

Doodle Box

It costs only £12.50 (+VAT) to sponsor the DOODLE BOX. Charities, companies and individuals may sponsor. Telephone 01325 464008 for details.

Cross-word solution number 396

THE £10 prize for the first opened correct solution goes to James Connor of Willington, Crook. Well done, your prize is on its way.

Across: 1. Express trains 8. Bar. 9. Enlivened. 10. Spectral. 11. Urge. 14. Blundered. 17. Open. 18. Restrain. 20. Distemper. 22. Dye. 23. Countermanded.

Down: 1. Emboss. 2. Permeable. 3. Electrum. 4. Salt and pepper. 5. Rave. 6. Ion. 7. Sadden. 12. Red handed. 13. Criteria. 15. Nordic. 16. Intend. 19. West. 21. Sou.

SMILES OF THE MONTH



□ Why are these young people so happy? Please turn to Page 31 to find out.

Cross Su Doku

FOR Su Doku each grid can be solved from the number clues in the grids.

Once you have got a logical sequence going, it gets easier.

But there are various tips to get you going.

To complete the puzzle grid, you need to fit every digit from 1 to 9 – in any order – in each row (reading left to right) and in each col-

umn (top-to-bottom) and in each box of nine squares.

Start by concentrating on the boxes, after that try to work out what is missing in each row or column. Look for pairs of numbers which might point you to a third.

Following a technical problem last month Northern Cross is running the same Su Doku challenge.

Solution on page 29.

	8					3	
7	6		3			2	
2	4		9			7	
			4	2		5	9
				9	7		
					6	7	4
				6	3		
					4	1	9
			7	8		2	5

Northern Cross codebreaker

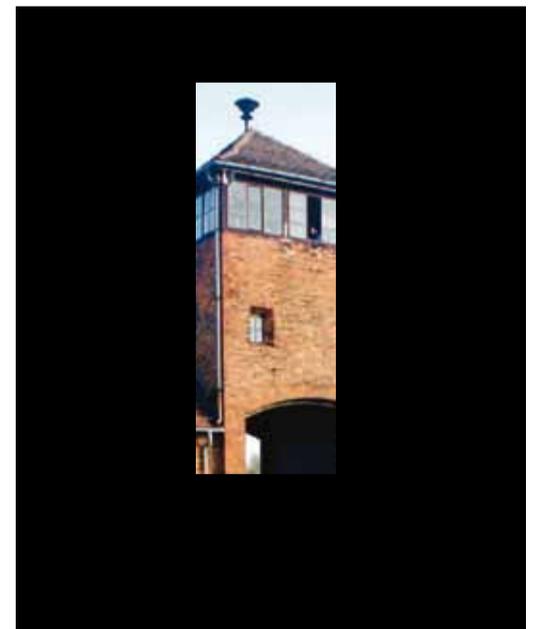
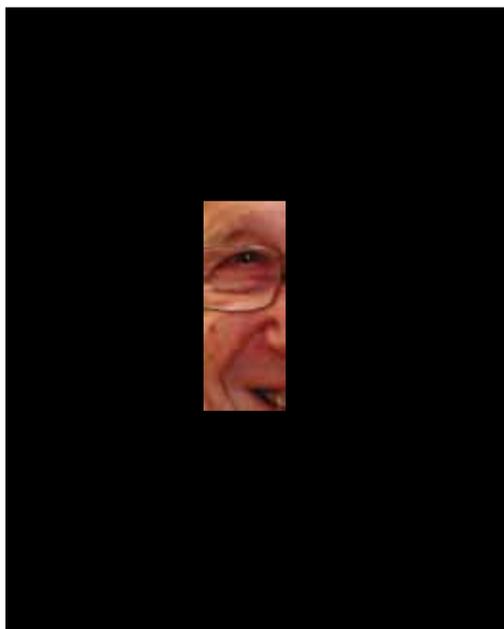
13	16	26	25	1										
3	24	26	14	22	17	24	23	8	23	7	1	22	26	
	23		16		22		14		26					
4	9	24	24	13		17	24	11	24	23	13	1	2	22
	22			12		17		20		4		13		
6	1	13	24		9	24	14	7	13	9				
	18		14		1		7		24		25		12	
2	19	13	4	1	21	24		13	17	2	7	7	24	8
	24		13		21		1		22		14		7	
			4	1	24	17	17	14		8	24	7	15	
	5		10		22		2		7				16	
14	19	16	24	17	26	1	22	24		14	4	9	24	22
	10		13			1		2				1		
19	15	4	24	13	13	1	22	26		2	12	1	22	26
	8		17			26					22		26	

1	14
2	15
3	16
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5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

A	N
B	O
C	P
D	Q
E	R
F	S
G	T
H	U
I	V
J	W
K	X
L	Y
M	Z

THIS is a crossword grid with numbers in every square. Each one represents a letter – but you need to puzzle out which letters of the alphabet go with which numbers! To start you off, some letters have already been entered in the grid. When you puzzle out your first word, enter all the letters in the key down the side. Then start working on the rest of the grid. The solution for today's puzzle is on page 29.

FAMOUS FACE AND A FAMOUS PLACE!



ANOTHER large entry for last month's Famous Face/Famous Place competition. The face was that of Prof Paul Murray and the place was the stonework arch on Hadrian's Wall. Well spotted, The first correct entry pulled from the 'hat' with

both answers right came from Mrs A Caldwell of Stockton-on-Tees, winning £20. Well done. Why not have a go at this month's competition. The face is that of a leading Catholic cleric and the place

is one with a dark past and it is in mainland Europe. Good luck! Entries please by Thursday December 31, 2015, to: Famous Face/Famous Place, Northern Cross, St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington, DL1 2 DR.



□ Sister Maureen in the garden at Oaklea, enjoying the autumn colours. "There is no autumn in the Sudan, just summer and winter," she said.

Sister Maureen marks 50 years of service

SISTER MAUREEN Limer, of the Sisters of Mercy in Sunderland, this year celebrated the golden jubilee of her entry into Oaklea convent.

But she could never have imagined in 1965 that the religious life would take her so far from Sunderland.

Born in Hebburn and educated at St Anthony's School in Sunderland, she joined the Sisters of Mercy.

As a girl she had enjoyed TV programmes about African wildlife, but never thought she would see the real thing.

In 1980, Sr Maureen went to Kenya to help with the work of other Mercy Sisters from Sunderland who had set up a school for girls, and she spent several years teaching there.

She was appointed project director for the Jesuit Refugee Service. This was set up by the then Jesuit General Fr Pedro Arrupe and involved a scholarship scheme to educate boys who showed potential.

She became aware of the problems in Sudan and travelled there to see a friend, Mercy Sr Marilyn Lacey, from California, who worked in refugee camps. She had been sent by her Order to help resettle young men who had been child soldiers in Ethiopia, who had never grown up in a family situation and knew only warfare.

By 1998, many Sudanese people had been living in refugee camps for eight years, and some of the younger boys were being considered for resettlement in the United States. Sister Maureen went to Sudan to assist in the work.

She was appointed a co-ordinator of the education department of the diocese of Rumbek. At the time she described the situation as children learning under trees, sitting on stones, and it is largely to the credit

by Bernadette Lawson

of the Church and others that some new or renovated pre-war buildings are currently in use. Staffing these schools presents a bigger problem.

Sr Maureen went on to set up, with the help of others, a teacher Training College.

Sr Marilyn founded a project, Mercy Beyond Borders in 2008, to help transform the lives of women and girls in extreme poverty. Her work began in South Sudan.

Having gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after a long war, South Sudan became the newest country in the world. Sr Marilyn believed that by educating girls and young women and encouraging them to develop positive ties between formerly hostile ethnic groups, Mercy Beyond Borders would contribute to South Sudan's positive development.

Decades of war had left South Sudan with a lack of infrastructure, extremely low literacy levels, and a weak public health system. MBB addressed these disparities through a variety of programmes.

Sr Maureen went to work among the refugees and in education, and continues to help in several projects.

Looking back on her time in Kenya and South Sudan, she has had great joy in learning how many of her former pupils have made their mark in various professions and careers.

During her recent visit back home to Oaklea Convent, Sr shared some of her experiences. She feels very supported by her Mercy community in Sunderland and by her brother John and his family in Gateshead. But her heart lies in Sudan and she wants to work there for as long as her health and strength permit.

SVP Society takes step-by-step approach to gain new members

by John Bailey

A TOWN-WIDE conference for the Society of St Vincent de Paul is to take a step-by-step approach to build a new band of helpers.

The promising October re-launch of Hartlepool Holy Family SVP was followed by a second meeting at the end of the month with seven members committing themselves to re-build the organisation across the town.

An eighth person has since asked to join.

Over the November 14-15 weekend they made an appeal at Masses for St Mary's and St John Vianney's congregations and new recruits are promised there.

Conference president David Relton is "very encouraged" by the response so far and the SVP now plans to target St Patrick's, St Cuthbert's and St Thomas More churches to win further members so each church is represented.

David intends to write to each new member inviting them to a further discussion to decide realistic objectives for the group, covering visiting people in hospital and care homes, charitable giving, supporting Foodbank collections, accepting re-usable clothing, providing emergency help for people in urgent need ... and even delivering Northern Cross.

"Our objective is to re-organise the Society across all six churches in the parish and grow from there," he said. "There will be a need for members working with elderly people living alone to be CRB-checked and register properly."

Meanwhile the original St Joseph's SVP conference continues to meet after lunchtime Mass on Thursdays.

Anyone interested in helping may contact David on 01429-268680 or Holy Family parish office on 01429-866288.

Tracing Irish ancestry has just got a lot easier

by Godfrey F Duffy

I began researching my Irish ancestry in 1986, and nearly thirty years later I have made substantial progress.

Initially the omens were not promising. Irish ancestral research was in its infancy, and there were few books on the subject. At the time I was living in London, and decided to visit the Society of Genealogists, and although they had an Irish section in their library, it was limited.

My encounter with a customer did nothing to boost my hopes for successfully tracing my Irish ancestors. He was dismissive of my chances, and remarked "You do realise that all the Irish records were destroyed in 1922."

This was a mantra I often heard repeated over the years, and if I had believed it I would not have made the progress I did.

The customer was referring to the destruction of the Public Record Office, which adjoined the Four Courts building in Dublin. This had been occupied by the Anti-Treaty forces during the Irish Civil War in 1922, and when the Pro-Treaty forces bombarded it a fire destroyed many valuable documents. The main loss being wills, census returns, and Church of Ireland parish registers.

However the Irish RC parish registers had not been deposited in the PRO, and had been retained in their churches throughout the country.

This was very fortunate for anyone with Irish Catholic ancestors, includ-

ing myself. The 1861 census was the first census to record denomination numbers, and at the time the Irish Catholics represented 77% of the Irish population.

A later development was the micro-filming of the RC parish registers by the National Library of Ireland during the 1960s. This centralising of the microfilmed RC registers in Dublin meant a single destination for anyone trying to trace their Irish Catholic ancestors.

My Irish ancestors left Ireland during and after the Famine of the late 1840s, and settled in County Durham. I discovered later that they had come from all parts of Ireland, and represented all thirty-two counties.

The influx of large numbers of Irish immigrants into northeast England at this time, greatly increased the Catholic population, and the Catholic Church responded with a church building programme which lasted until the 20th century.

I was introduced to the parish registers of the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle by the Diocesan Archivist Robin Gard, who was both helpful and informative.

He described them as a 'genealogical goldmine' for family historians, interested in their Catholic ancestors.

I discovered many of my Irish ancestors in these registers, and the marriage registers were especially informative, recording not only infor-

mation on the married couple but their parents' origins in Ireland, including parishes and counties.

I worked with Robin Gard and Archbishop Griffiths in the 2001-2010 period in order to have the diocesan parish registers microfilmed and deposited in the regional archives at Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear.

That process is now complete, and is an invaluable source for genealogists and historians.

During the last twenty years websites have added Irish and English records, including parish registers to their collections.

I recommend Ancestry.com, Find my Past.ie and Familysearch.org.

Recently I began a project collecting Irish ancestral material, and it seemed to me that it would be a useful guide for anyone researching Irish ancestors in northeast England. I hope to find a publisher for this and welcome any suggestions from readers.

● **Godfrey Duffy is an author and genealogist who teaches an Irish ancestry course at the Tyneside Irish Centre in Newcastle upon Tyne.**

He can be contacted by email at gorryduffy@gmail.com

● **The Irish RC parish registers became available online in July of this year and can be accessed for free at the National Library of Ireland website, www.nli.ie**



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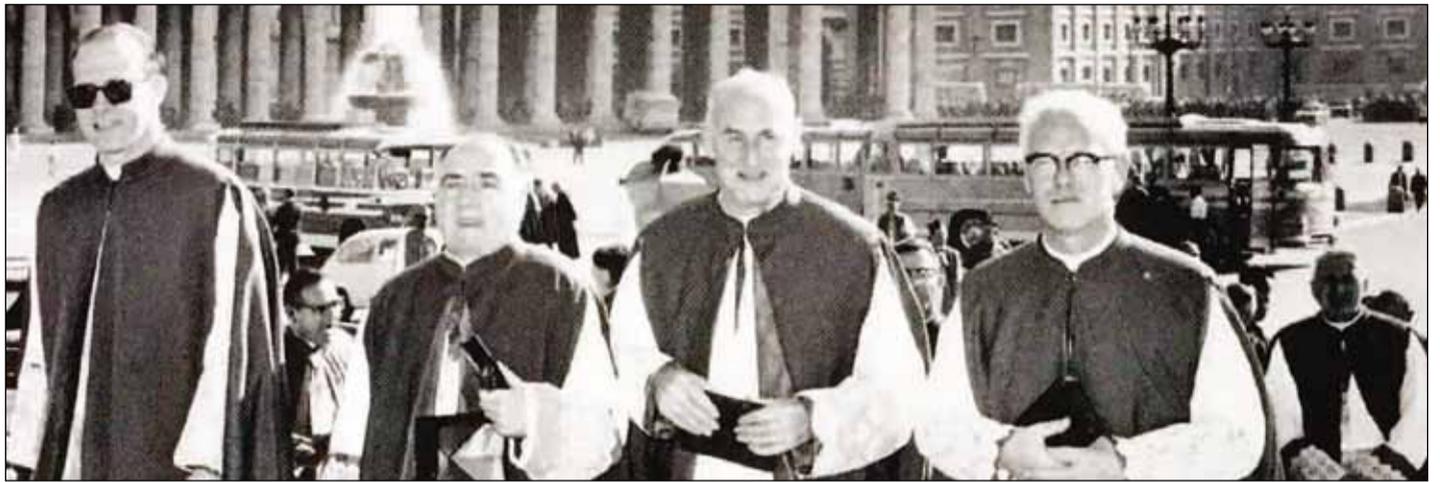
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Mgr McReavy, second from the right, walks into a session of the Vatican Council. Mgr Derek Warlock, future Archbishop of Liverpool, is on the far left.

Has Vatican II done all it set out to do?

by Abbot Cuthbert Johnson

TO MARK the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated the celebration of the Year of Faith.

Pope Francis has chosen the anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council (December 8) as the day to open the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

While different in tem-

perament and personality, both popes are complimentary in their teaching and in agreement upon the need to enrich our understanding of the Second Vatican Council.

The anniversary of the close of the council has not passed unnoticed in our diocese. At the recent presentation in St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle, of the publication of "Vatican II as I saw it" containing the letters, journal, diary and papers of Mgr

Lawrence Leslie McReavy, Professor at Ushaw College, Bishop Seamus Cunningham welcomed the volume as marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the council.

The Bishop also said it served to recall and honour the memory of a priest of our diocese "who played a discreet but not insignificant part in the work of the council from 1962 to 1965".

Pope Francis, who described the council as "a

beautiful work of the Holy Spirit", has reminded the Church of the council's call to holiness and a transformation of mind and heart.

The council provided a renewal at many levels. Catholics feel uncomfortable today when they are reminded that at the Queen's coronation the Pope's delegate refused to take the place of honour prepared for him in Westminster Abbey but followed the ceremony from an adjoining room.

A marriage celebrated between a Catholic and a non-Catholic took place without any ceremony, not even the singing of a hymn. Presence at the funeral of a life-long non-Catholic friend required permission.

Although the council brought about much-needed renewal, Pope Francis has asked us to examine our consciences and ask whether we have "done everything the Holy Spirit was asking us to do during the council".

It was already recognised at the close of the council that it would take time, perhaps several generations, to implement its teaching. Mgr McReavy, just a month after the close of the council, wrote: "It will take many years before the changes bear fruit and much depends on how earnestly bishops, priests and faithful cooperate."

"The council has certainly sharpened the Church's sense of involvement in the problems that vex the modern world - war, hunger, illiteracy, over-population - and pledged her to active cooperation with all men of good will. It has charted the path of the Church perhaps for centuries to come."

Another English participant in the council, Abbot Christopher Butler, wrote to his sister: "The Roman Catholic people in England have, so far, only a very shadowy and imperfect idea of what it all means - they are preoccupied with little changes in Mass ceremonies etc."

"To me, the council is potentially one of the biggest things that have happened in the Church since 1054. But so many people even if they have been members of the Council don't seem to see it."

These words still ring true today. There are those who still do not realise that the council was "one of the biggest things that have happened in the Church" and that the teaching of the council, while being in continuity with tradition, brought about great change for renewal.

Renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit and Christ calls the Church, made up as it is of human beings with all their strengths and weaknesses, to a constant increase of fidelity to the Gospel. Blessed Pope Paul VI, in his Encyclical Letter on the Church *Ecclesiam Suam*, said that the Church must examine herself and see whether the ideal image of the Church as the holy and spotless bride of Christ is the image which the Church actually presents to the world today.

Many faithful Catholics are not only challenged but also troubled by the image of the Church today seen by some as fragmented and dysfunctional. They welcome renewal and are not prepared to accept any attempt to disguise the flaws

and weaknesses of what was once thought to be a mighty stronghold.

A Church which is perceived as an authoritative structure that has shown itself incompetent in the welfare of its members, devious in some of its undertakings and defective in its mission to sanctify, must heed the council's call to holiness if it is to undergo that purification and renewal in order that the Light of Christ may shine more brightly over the face of the earth.

As Pope St John Paul II pointed out on the eve of the Millennium, the way to renewal is to be found in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the Magisterium. Pope Francis sees service and solidarity with the poor and the most vulnerable in society as a manifestation of the council's call to holiness. Through humility and charity Pope Francis believes that the process of healing the wounds of the scandals that have shamed the Church in recent years can begin.

It is within that understanding of renewal as fidelity to the teaching of the Gospel and response to the universal call to holiness that the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle has undertaken the programme of Forward Together in Hope.

On the eve of the opening of the Holy Year of Mercy, the words of Pope St John Paul II, which have been echoed by both Pope Benedict and Pope Francis, still ring out and need to be heard: "What a treasure there is, dear brothers and sisters, in the guidelines offered to us by the Second Vatican Council. For this reason I asked the Church, as a way of preparing for the Great Jubilee, to examine herself on the reception given to the council. Has this been done? With the passing of the years, the council documents have lost nothing of their value or brilliance."

"They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's tradition. I feel it duty bound to point to the council as the great grace bestowed on the Church in the 20th Century - there we find a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning".



Fr Colin Carr, Fr Sean Hall and Fr Chris Hughes at the Laudato Si day conference.



A group discussion in progress at the Laudato Si day conference held at St Teresa's, Heaton.

Pope Francis seeking common ground

Words and pictures by Alison Rebello

FOR the 70 people who attended a day conference on 'Laudato Si', Pope Francis's encyclical on 'care for our common home' it has provided some fuel for thought.

Fr Sean Hall spoke about the rise of modern communication techniques and the subject matters covered by various encyclicals meant that gradually they were addressed to wider groups firstly within the church itself-including ultimately "the faithful", and then "all people of good will". And as such *Laudato Si*, is a document written from a particular theological perspective and above all it is a call by Pope Francis for dialogue with all concerned.

"Tradition is not the meaningless repetition of past nostrums but rather an example of a phrase that used to appear on the edge of our two-pound coins, "standing on the shoulders of giants" (a phrase attributed both to Bernard of Chartres (12th) and Sir Isaac Newton (17th)). In this case, the particular 'giants' whose work Pope Francis is building on are the popes beginning with John XXIII, then Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI in their various encyclicals and addresses dealing with environmental and developmental issues."

In his second session, Fr Sean passionately spoke on *Laudato Si* and Scripture wherein he states that: "criticism of the encyclical has come from all angles. For some people who criticise Pope Francis they think a pope should stick to religious stuff and religious sources for his arguments, like the Bible. In arguing, as Pope

Francis does, he is trying to establish common ground on which people of all faiths and none may agree. In doing this, he is actually doing something which we find in our scriptural tradition from the earliest preaching of the good news in the Acts of the Apostles.

"Here we see Peter and, especially, Paul creating common ground with their audiences in different context. The common ground Paul tries to create is based on reasoned argument, precisely what Pope Francis is doing in the first chapter of *Laudato Si*."

The second speaker Fr Chris Hughes focussed his session around 'Integrating faith and practice: *Laudato Si* as an example of practical theology' where he drew references from his days at Ushaw College, where he taught Practical Theology. The second topic he touched on was about what's happening to our common home-namely around pollution, waste and a throw away culture, climate, water biodiversity, extinct species, global inequality and weak responses by the international community. Based on these key issues Fr Chris reiterated that Pope Francis is asking us to change our mindset and lifestyle.

The post lunch session saw Fr Colin Carr posing a question: "Will *Laudato Si* make any difference to our world?" Fr Colin gave a personal testimony saying after reading this amazing encyclical several times, which is written by a man with a prophet's vision and a poet's sensibility, I have come to realise something about myself which is not very flattering: I love books, but to judge from the number of books in my room at St Dominic's, not to mention what's on my Kindle, I seem to be more interested in getting

books than reading them. I am as badly bitten by consumerism as anyone, and Pope Francis stresses that that is a primary sickness of our time.

"We are conditioned to be consumers; selfishness is a kind of protection against the insecurities which threaten us, so we forget the common good and head towards violence and destruction. Is he being too apocalyptic here? Does it feel as though Newcastle is a smouldering volcano about to erupt in resentful fury of poor against rich? Is he thinking too much about extremes of wealth and poverty such as you find in his own Latin America? Like a prophet he is seeing the long term trend of our behaviour, and while Newcastle- let alone Tunbridge Wells- may not look like a tinder box."

Fr Colin concluded: prophets may be heard, or they may well not be, but small groups of people who hear the prophetic word will change the world.

The session ended with a closing prayer by Fr Chris based on the book of Daniel 3:57-81 which has a resemblance to the ecology and the environment. Participants were asked to form groups and discuss the proceedings of the day and how we can make a difference individually and as a group.

Additionally, a 10 point summary of *Laudato Si* by American Jesuit priest Fr James Martin which is available on YouTube was beamed to the audience.

In conclusion it was suggested that this could be taken to the next level by involving people from different walks of life who can broaden the scope of this important encyclical.

RC Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Youth Service

Youth Ministry Team

Wonderful celebration marks Youth day



Children at St Joseph's Stanley enjoyed 'being goodies' and wearing hoodies to raise money for Youth Friday.



Hands of Mercy at St Aidan's Ashington.



Left, a girl speaks about her experience at Lourdes. Above, Youth Friday at St Wilfrid's RC College, South Shields

THE celebration of Youth Sunday took place throughout the diocese on the Feast of Christ the King.

This year's theme was 'Love Undeserved' and looked forward to the opening of the Year of Mercy during which Pope Francis calls the whole Church to receive and share with others the mercy of God, freely given and withheld from no-one.

In St Aidan's Parish, Ashington, young people created a striking visual depiction of 'Mercy' made out of handprints.

The celebrations began on November 20 when the whole family of diocesan schools participated in Youth Friday.

A message from Bishop Seamus was sent to both schools and parishes for this special weekend and it was an opportunity for the whole diocese to thank God for the gift of young people and for the joy and hope they bring to the Church.

On February 3, the Youth Friday celebrations will culminate in St Mary's Cathedral when representatives from every school in

the Diocese will gather with Bishop Seamus to share their reflections on the theme of 'Love Undeserved' and to offer their Youth Friday donations.

Part of the 'Forward Together in Hope' questionnaire had asked parishes to reflect on how they can encourage and support the presence and witness of young people in their communities.

Youth Sunday was an opportunity for all parishioners to renew their commitment to young people and, in particular, to support the work of the Diocesan Youth Service, the Youth Ministry Trust.

On Youth Sunday adults and young people were invited to stand side by side to share their faith and to describe the opportunities offered to young people in our diocese to support them on their faith journey.

In St Mary's Cathedral, the large numbers of young people in the congregation were called out to the front at the end of Mass so that adult parishioners could appreciate their presence and offer affirmation and support.

In many churches young

people gave a personal witness to some of the opportunities which had enabled them to grow in faith. Some talked about Lourdes, others The Source monthly event or Retreats and Festivals at the Youth Village.

Some young people shared their memories of Flame earlier this year when 600 young people had travelled to London for the National Catholic Youth Congress.

A recently established diocesan initiative for the sixth form age-group is the Pope John Paul II Award and in St Peter's Low Fell where five young people gave witness to their faith, the oldest, Liam Waugh, talked about the Award and the youngest, Isabel Elliott, shared her experience with the SVP Mini-Vinnies.

In St Joseph's Sunderland, a moving Lourdes testimony from Charlotte Potts was so powerful that parishioners asked for copies of what she shared.

An adult parishioner told YMT: "Our young people were nothing short of magnificent. It felt like total parish involvement for the first time in a long time."



Young people giving witness at St Peter's Low Fell.



Young people at St Agnes' Crawcrook.



□ Above - last year together.

□ Left - the outstanding staff.

□ Right - student reflection.



Retreat relaxes and inspires final-year group

A GROUP of Year 13 students from Cardinal Hume School, Gateshead, attended a retreat at the Youth Village in Consett in recognition of the spiritual importance of enabling an outlet for the stresses brought on by the rigour of academic studies.

Led by the excellent Youth Ministry Team (YMT), the theme of the retreat was 'Tapestry'.

It was revealed to students as a way of understanding how the various people we know, life's failures and successes and the good and bad times, all impact on us to make us the people we are.

by Damian McCann

Using this idea as a focal point, students were led to reflect on the great journey ahead of them as they spend their last year at school.

The residential was brilliantly led by Philip and the YMT team as they took students through a process of getting them relaxed in the new environment and then being in position to reflect on the retreat theme. From nerve-jangling Jenga to debates on the existence of God, all students found both solace and entertainment in the retreat experience.

The students themselves thoroughly enjoyed being together as a school leaver group and to feel supported by the school, staff and YMT as they prepared for their final exam year and life after school.

A selection of student quotes below help sum up what the event meant to them:

"It was a nice time out which gave me time to reflect upon myself and how deal with the challenges that lie ahead."

"I learnt a lot about my abilities and self-worth, both spiritually and in other ways. For example, I learnt that God is always a support; I can make an awe-

some egg tower and guess multiple film soundtracks. Cool."

"It gave me an opportunity to relax and take time out from the daily stresses of sixth form."

"I had a great time at the retreat as we were able to learn more about ourselves and it helped our team building."

"It helped me understand that when we connect properly with the spiritual side of our human condition, it helps us deal with all the stresses of life."

"The retreat was a great way to escape the stresses of school and helped me think more of the spiritual part of me."



□ Students of St Joseph's Academy pictured at the Yves Saint Laurent exhibition at Bowes Museum.

Students experience eternal style

AS GUESTS of the University of Teesside, the A level Textiles students of St Joseph's Catholic Academy, Hebburn, attended the Yves Saint Laurent exhibition at the Bowes Museum this autumn.

'Style is eternal' is a celebration of the work of YSL who invented the modern woman's wardrobe.

Borrowing from male codes of dress, he created clothing that gave women confidence, audacity and power while still preserving their femininity.

The event enabled the students to see first-hand his fashion illustrations and calico toiles as well as the many famous garments he produced including Le Smoking Suit, the Mondrian dress and the Safari suit.

Original photographs from the vari-

ous catwalk shows and photo shoots, the infamous Vogue fashion magazine which launched the Mondrian dress and video clips from the 1960s and 1970s enhanced the exhibition and gave students a real taste of fashions from the era, enhancing their understanding of the Design and Market Influences aspect of the A level specification.

All works on display were from the Foundation Pierre Berge - YSL, Paris and were chosen to reflect the ethos of the French-style chateau hosting the event.

Bowes Museum was the only European venue to host the exhibition so it was a real honour to be invited to the exhibition and see the iconic products first hand.

- Anthony Logan



□ The school chaplains are pictured with Bishop Seamus at St Cuthbert's High School.

Friendly walk

by Lewis Russell

ALL the Year 12 Sixth Form students of St Joseph's Catholic Academy, Hebburn, took part in a sponsored walk to raise money for our tutor groups' chosen charities.

The walk's six-mile route was from school to the Millennium Bridge in Gateshead.

We stopped off at Bill Quay Farm during the walk, and I for one absolutely loved this. My friends and I felt like kids again being among the animals.

Overall, the Year 12 sponsored walk was a fantastic day. It gave us the opportunity to not only get some sunshine and exercise, but to meet new people, make friends and spend time with friends too.

□ Right - The Year 12 students of St Joseph's Academy step out on their sponsored walk.



Bishop praises school chaplains

ST CUTHBERT'S Catholic High School, Newcastle, warmly welcomed Bishop Seamus Cunningham and the primary and secondary school chaplains from the diocese.

The visitors were greeted by students from Years 10 and 11 and taken to the state-of-the-art Reece Building where they enjoyed refreshments before celebrating Mass in the chapel.

Bishop Seamus welcomed and blessed five

new chaplains in to their roles and extended this blessing to the current chaplains, encouraging all to continue the extraordinary work they do in their schools.

GCSE Catering students hosted a fantastic luncheon, serving up delicious treats for all.

The students were wholeheartedly congratulated by the Bishop and chaplains for their achievements, with many of the guests going back for second helpings.

St Cuthbert's welcomes Italian guests

FAMILIES and students from St Cuthbert's Catholic High School, Newcastle, welcomed a group of Italian students from their partner school in the town of Adro, Italy, on a language exchange visit at the beginning of November.

The group of 24 from the school of Istituto Madonna Della Neve (Our Lady of the Snow) arrived with the aim of immersing them-

by Elliot Luke

selves into our rich culture, providing an opportunity for both sides to improve their language skills and understanding of each other's culture, while establishing friendships for life.

Led by Signora Longhi, our guests resided with host families in Newcastle and got a taste of daily school and family life in North East England.

They enjoyed a trip to the Tyneside Cinema to see the latest Bond film with students and host families, and spent a day of reflection and rest on Holy Island. Each Italian student paired up with an English student and took part in lessons with them, experiencing an alternative style of learning from that of their own country.

However, it wasn't only the Italians who benefitted from the exchange; students from across the school worked with them at all levels on improving their Italian. The exchange provided fantastic opportunities to socialise, including a bilingual Mass conducted by Father Dunne in the school chapel, plenty of retail therapy on Northumberland Street and a wonderful evening of food and music back at St Cuthbert's.

One of the students contacted us after returning to Italy to say: "The exchange was an amazing opportu-



□ The St Cuthbert's students with their Italian guests, pictured in Alnwick.

nity to get to know a new country and a new culture different to our own. I truly learnt a lot of things - not to judge without having tried and not to have preconceptions of the English, because they are exactly the same as us Italians. It was truly fantastic."

The exchange was the latest in a long history of collaboration between St Cuthbert's and Madonna Della Neve and was expertly organised by staff on both sides of the Alps. Both students and staff look forward to seeing our Italian friends again when we visit in February

● Elliot Luke is an Upper 6 student.



□ St Cuthbert's students Alain Vendiola and Reece Clelland doing AS Italian related interviews with partners Daniela Marsiglio and Matteo Vitali from liceo Madonna della Neve, Adro



□ St Joseph's students with some of the merchandise sold at their fundraisers.

Boost for cancer charity

ST JOSEPH'S Catholic Academy in Hebburn raised money for Macmillan Cancer Support with a coffee morning and a 'toast post' fundraiser.

The student coffee morning, organised by the Sixth Form, and a staff coffee morning in the Science Department raised £247.72 raised for this very worthwhile cause.

The Sixth Form break-time 'toast post' has been raising money for a variety of good causes since the start of the academic year.

During the half-term the main focus was to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society and they've also contributed to the Key Project. The more toast the students sell, the more money they raise.



□ The Mini Vinnies of St Godric's Primary School pictured with Michael Carter of the Apostleship of the Sea, and Mrs Janet Nichols, President of Sts Godric and Bede SVP Conference.

St Godric's pupils support seafarers

THE SVP Mini Vinnies at St Godric's Primary School, Newton Hall, Durham, have been busy collecting toiletries for Filipino seafarers.

Their class teacher, Mrs Dunn, explained the importance of the seamen's work and described the uncomfortable conditions they often have to face when at sea, away from their families for months.

The children decided to provide toilet bags, each containing a toothbrush and

toothpaste, shaving gel and razors, shampoo, soap, deodorant and a comb, and they used various methods, including the school newsletter, to advertise their project to parents and parishioners.

They received an overwhelming response and were able to put together 36 packs which also included a card from the children. These were presented to Michael Carter, from the Apostleship of the Sea and were gratefully received.



□ The St Peter's Primary School prayer group.

Children meet for prayers

ST PETER'S Primary School in Low Fell celebrated October as the month of the Rosary by forming a prayer group that met each Friday lunchtime.

Up to 35 children attended from Years 3 to 6 and the children were encouraged to bring in rosary beads from home.

Lisa Stokoe, Headteacher, said: "The prayer group was very reverent and prayerful. It was a joy to see."

Town landmarks replicated in clay



□ A St Aloysius pupil creates a clay sculpture of a local building.

TWENTY Year 6 students from St Aloysius Primary School, Hebburn, visited the art department at St Joseph's Catholic Academy to learn how to create their own masterpiece.

The work is on show in an exhibition at St Aloysius Church, Hebburn, until mid-December.

Each of the students created their own clay piece replicating a building in Hebburn, which included everything from their church and school to the well known block of flats in the town.

The children all listened

carefully while finding out how to roll out their clay and how to use each clay tool they were given. Once they had completed this task they all drew out their place of choice onto their piece of clay. The children then managed to cut around their building to remove the excess clay, some even decided to cut out extra features such as windows.

Finally they were taught how to attach more clay on top of their base to make it more 3D - some chose to use this technique to add words such as shop names to their work

A group of Year 2 chil-

dren arrived for their session in Photography.

In photography the children were each given a role within the scene of the nativity or to help organize and take a photograph.

Each child who was in the photograph dressed up in their outfits relating to the role they were given.

The photograph was taken in the style of a silhouette and used different coloured tissue paper over the lights to help create the different colour background.

- Katherine Guy, Deputy Head Girl, St Joseph's Academy.

Christmas appeal sees students fill 211 boxes

ST Aidan's Catholic Academy, Sunderland, has been working hard to fill shoe boxes to support the Samaritan Purse which has focussed its appeal on children in Syria.

The aim of this international charity is to provide children with gifts at Christmas.

The students wanted to support this work as part of their Gospel values.

Three sixth form students, Chris Trotter, Niall Groark and Liam Thompson, went to St Joseph's Church, Millfield, Sunderland and spoke to the congregation at the end of Mass to encourage them to support their appeal. They also went into all the year group assemblies and gave a power point presentation to the students to enlist their support. At the

by Paul Baker

end of these presentations they invited the respective audiences to ask questions about the appeal.

All contributors were asked to provide a sturdy shoe box and to put in any of the following items; toys, especially anything with a "wow" factor; school supplies such as paper, crayons and colouring books; non-liquid hygiene items such as tooth brushes, toothpaste and combs and other items such as hats, sunglasses, hair grips and jewellery.

As importantly, were the items NOT to put into the boxes. These included war related toys, chocolate and clothes.

The boxes also need to be identified for either boys or girls and by age

range which are: 2-4years; 5-9years and 10-14.

Amazingly 211 boxes were filled! And then they had to be wrapped by the students in the sixth form. Chris Trotter was very hopeful that these boxes would have a real impact, "to make children happy and to show that they were not forgotten". Jacob Noonan and Jake Sagi, Year 7 students at the school hoped the children, "would be excited because they don't get very much".

Fr Michael McCoy, Parish Priest at St Joseph's and St Anne's Parishes said he was delighted with the shared commitment of parish and student.

In addition to the items brought in for the shoe box appeal, the parishioners raised £800 towards the cost of sending the shoe boxes to Syria.



Children at St Cuthbert's First School, Berwick, with the food they collected for distribution to the local food bank.

Stars of the future

PUPILS at St Cuthbert's RC First school in Berwick have had a busy few weeks this autumn helping others and receiving an accolade of their own in the town's Literary Festival.

Children donated and collected tins and packets of food for their harvest celebration. A display was made with all the donations and the school's Mini Vinnies then delivered the goods to the local food bank.

Early Years children had a visit from Courage the Cat from the Radio Borders team to thank them for raising £100 for

Cash for kids at their bake sale. As a reward, they received Radio Borders inflatable microphones, which the children used to sing and pretend to host their own radio show.

This year's Berwick Literary Festival was a success for the school. Three pupils from Class 3, Luciana, Imogen and Poppy, were shortlisted in the First Schools' short story competition, with one being awarded runners up prize. For another pupil, Finley, his illustration of the poem The Hag won first prize at the festival.



Radio stars of the future - St Cuthbert's First School children in Berwick practice their presenting skills with inflatable microphones.



Generous students with the shoe boxes they have helped to fill.

Royal delight

CHILDREN in Years 4 and 5 of St Cuthbert's Primary School, Walbottle, wrote letters to the Queen to congratulate her on her long reign.

They were so excited to receive a reply from Buckingham Palace, written by a Lady-in-Waiting on behalf of the Queen.

It stated: "The Queen wishes me to thank you for the lovely letters you have sent on the occasion of Her Majesty becoming the longest reigning monarch in British history.

"The Queen was pleased to hear from you and, although Her Majesty does not have time to reply personally to all the hundreds of people who write to her each day, The Queen was touched by all of the kind things you said.

"Her Majesty greatly appreciated your good wishes at this time, and thanks you once again for your most thoughtful letters and the care you have taken in writing them.

"Annabel Whitehead, Lady-in-Waiting."



Class teacher Alexis Fernandes shows the children of St Cuthbert's Primary School, Walbottle, the letter from the Queen.

Teachers bid a sad farewell

TWO teachers from St Stephen's RC Primary School, Longbenton are leaving.

Bernadette Dunn, who has been a teacher for 24 years with St Stephen's is leaving and Lucy Barker who has been with St Stephen's since 2011 is

moving to Northumbria University as a senior lecturer in primary education.

Bernadette Dunn worked in a Catholic School in Rotherham before moving to St Stephen's in 1991. She started teaching Year 3 pupils initially before starting to work as

Maths and ICT coordinator in 2001. In 2003 she became Assistant Head before retiring from this role in 2013. For the last two years she has worked part time supporting Year 6 and other classes in Key Stage 2. During her time at St Stephen's and she was Acting Head Teacher for 6 months before Stephen Fallon, the current head teacher was appointed.

Bernadette said: "It will be a massive wrench to leave. I have been very lucky with both the wonderful colleagues that have given me massive support over the years and the Head Teachers who have guided and encouraged me through the years. Over the years, I have been humbled by the community spirit

that is St Stephen's and was the parish of St Peter and Paul's. This will be one of the most difficult parts to leave behind."

Lucy Barker started working with St Stephen's as Assistant Head Teacher and Special Education Needs Coordinator since 2011.

As part of her role in Northumbria University, Lucy will be teaching the trainee teachers through lectures, workshops and seminars and observing them on placements in schools in the North East.

She said: "I have enjoyed working with wonderful staff and parents but most especially the children who have delighted me every single day."

- Alison Rebello



Bernadette Dunn.



Lucy Barker.

Opportunities for teacher training across Europe

CARMEL College, Darlington, has joined a pioneering European project, Erasmus+, which explores best practice in initial teacher training.

Carmel is working with colleagues from edUcation, Teach for Bulgaria; Centre for School Improvement, Lithuania; Federacion EFAS Comunidad Valenciana and a Primary School in Pefkochori, Greece.

The two-year project will involve each country hosting a study visit and sharing their experience of teacher training and development.

The project was launched in November at Carmel, when delegates from Spain, Lithuania and Bulgaria

were welcomed by Maura Regan, Chief Executive Officer of Carmel Educational Trust and Stephen Hughes, recently retired MEP for Darlington.

Mr Hughes opened the visit with warm words of encouragement and identified the rich understanding and sharing that the work will foster. Speaking of the enormous benefits of European collaboration, he urged that the organisations take the opportunity to "teach each other well".

Guests enjoyed a full programme of workshops, discussions and school visits. St Paul's RC Primary School, Billingham, and Harton Technology College, South Shields, were generous hosts, inviting the

Erasmus team into their schools to share their experiences of working with Carmel Teacher Training Partnership.

The visitors were guests of honour of Coun Tom and Gill Nutt, the Mayor and Mayoress of Darlington, and the launch event celebrated how the region benefits economically, socially, culturally and intellectually from its many international links.

Evenings offered visitors the opportunity to enjoy the local culture and they particularly enjoyed the magnificent Luminere, in Durham.

The next stage of the project will involve study visits to Luthania and Greece in 2016.



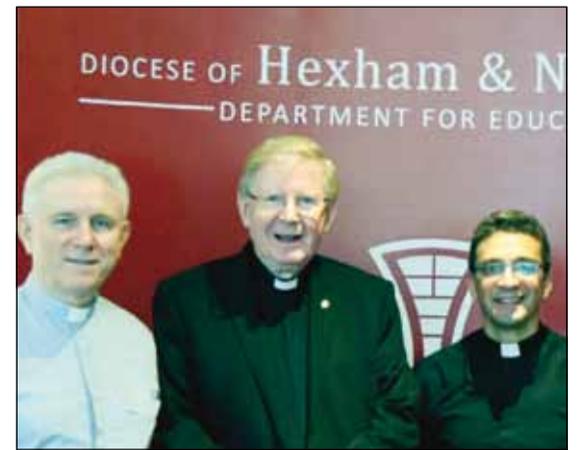
The international guests of Erasmus are welcomed to the North East.



□ John Burland pictured at the RE coordinator conference



□ A total of 196 delegates enjoyed the heads and clergy conference.



□ Fr Eamonn Mulcahy, Bishop Seamus Cunningham and Canon Luiz Ruscillo.

THE reports and photographs on this page have been submitted by the Education Department of the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle.

Primary Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Clergy Conference 2015

ON November 5 and 6, almost 200 delegates attended the annual Primary Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Clergy Conference was held at the Hilton Hotel Gateshead.

The theme this year was 'Spiritual Leadership' and the programme included inspirational keynote talks from Fr Eamonn Mulcahy, a Spiritan priest from Manchester, and Canon Luiz Ruscillo, Director of Education for the Diocese of Lancaster. Children from St Charles' Primary School in Gosforth led the opening liturgy of the conference.

The conference closed with Mass at St Mary's Cathedral celebrated by Bishop Seamus Cunningham and concelebrated by a number of priests.

The choir from St Agnes' School in Crawcrook led the singing at Mass. It was a very inspirational conference which allowed those present to reflect on their roles as spiritual leaders.

School chaplains

SECONDARY and primary lay school chaplains gathered from across the diocese on Friday, November 13, for a day held at St Cuthbert's Catholic High School in Newcastle.

The day started with Mass and the induction of new school chaplains in the school chapel, celebrated by Bishop Seamus and concelebrated by Fr Michael McCoy.

The rest of the day included diocesan updates and the sharing of good practice. A delicious lunch was cooked by students from St Cuthbert's Catholic High School who are studying GCSE Hospitality and Catering.

Youth Friday

YOUTH Friday was celebrated in all of our schools across the diocese on Friday, November 20.

The Diocesan Department of Education developed liturgies for primary and secondary schools and lesson ideas for teachers to explore this year's theme of 'Love Undeserved'.

The theme was chosen to herald the Year of Mercy and Bishop Seamus recorded a video message to be shown in all schools on the theme.

Schools were also invited to fundraise to support the work of YMT. Representatives from each school have been invited by Bishop Seamus to attend an event at St Mary's Cathedral in February to celebrate the work of YMT.

Diocesan schools complete hectic programme of events dedicated to spiritual development

New to Catholic Education

SIX days of training for primary teachers who are new to Catholic education were led by Deborah Fox, Deputy Director of Education, and Claire Hetherington, Primary RE Adviser.

Teachers from all year groups were invited to venues in the north and south of the diocese and 100 attended in total.

The course covered the aims and purpose of Catholic schools, the place of Religious Education as the core subject in the curriculum, the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme, assessment of Religious Education, and a specific focus on planning the Advent/Christmas topic.

Day Two for each group will be held in the spring to explore prayer and worship in the Catholic primary school and a specific focus on teaching the Lent/Easter topic. A shorter course is also offered to secondary schools by Andrew Barron, Secondary RE Adviser.

Primary RE Coordinator Conference

THE annual conference for primary RE coordinators was held at the Lancastrian Suite in Dunston in October. It was attended by 137 RE coordinators, headteachers, and school chaplains.

The theme of the conference was 'The Prayer Life of the School'.

Fr Adrian Dixon, Head of the Department for Liturgy, opened the conference with an inspiring keynote talk. This was followed by John Burland, a teacher, catechist and songwriter from

Australia, who shared and taught liturgical songs and hymns for young children.

In the afternoon, delegates attended three out of a possible 10 workshops linked to the theme of prayer.

These were led by Kevin Atkinson (More Than Dance), Phil Togwell (Prayer Spaces in School), Catherine Ferguson (Praying with Icons), Sr Margaret Wilson (Capacitar Practices in Prayer), Sr Sheila McNamara (Exploring Creativity in Prayer), Mary Cooper (Godly Play), Kathryn Turner (Diocesan Department of Spirituality), Martin O'Brien (Ten Ten Theatre), Dannie Firth (Wednesday Word), Gemma Salter (CAFOD) and Mark Fleeson (Lindisfarne Scriptorium).

There was also a market place of contributors. Delegates enjoyed the day and went away with lots of ideas of how to further develop the prayer life of their schools.

Year of Mercy

THE Diocesan Department for Education has been working on resources to support all schools in celebrating the Year of Mercy.

Schools are being encouraged to use the 'Good Samaritan' poster and resource pack which is produced by Pauline Books and Media and includes resources written by Deborah Fox and Claire Hetherington.

A full programme for the Year of Mercy is being developed for each month using the corporal works of mercy as a focus. It will include liturgies, services, prayers, opportunities for parent and parish engagement and links with global issues and charities.



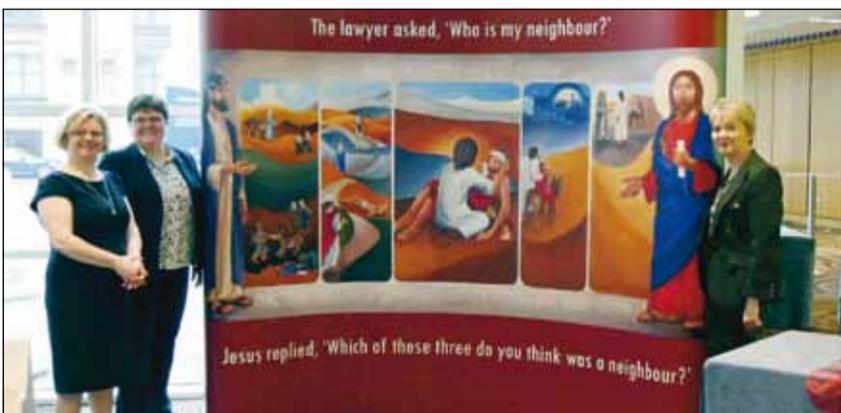
□ Michael Willcock with Mini Vinnies display.



□ The choir at St Agnes' School in Crawcrook led the singing at Mass in St Mary's Cathedral.



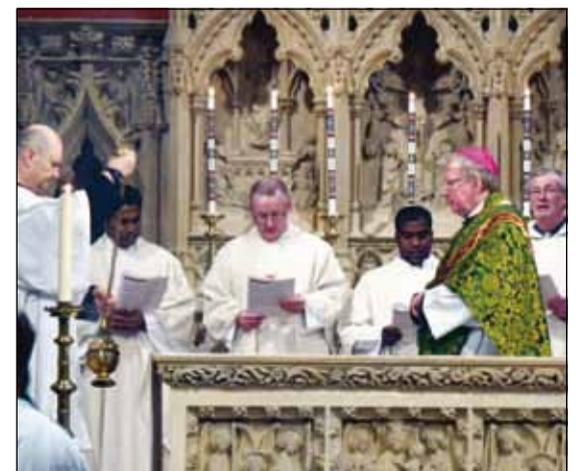
□ The Godly Play.



□ Sr Angela, Daughter of St Paul, Deborah Fox, Deputy Director of the Department for Education and Claire Hetherington with an enlarged poster of the Good Samaritan Resource.



□ Canon Luiz Ruscillo gave an inspiring talk



□ Bishop Seamus celebrates the conference Mass at St Mary's Cathedral.



□ PCSO Chris Noble and PCSO Gavin Laycock with Year 1 children at St Joseph's.

Children devise anti-bullying plan

CHILDREN at St Joseph's Primary School, Newton Aycliffe, held an anti-bullying week last month.

Every class in the school was busy with activities and discussions about what bullying is and how to stop it happening. Art work was produced by the children and displayed in classes.

Two children from each class also painted murals. Local police officers went into school to deliver an assembly to the children.

Teachers talked about the fact that in order for a person's actions to be called bullying they have to be repeated. Falling out with a friend one day and making up the next is not bullying. Being unkind to someone day after day is bullying.

The children came up with some ideas about how they can beat bullying:

- Look out for the other children in their class
- Tell a teacher or someone you trust about what is happening
- Talk to the bully and tell them to stop
- If you can, ignore the bully
- If their friend is being bullied, go over and ask them if they would like to play with you or tell a teacher what is happening

People who are being bullied often feel very alone. It can feel as if no-one cares or even that other people are on the bully's side if they don't speak up.

St Joseph's wants all its children to feel safe at school.



□ Charlotte and Sarah at Tyne Cot Memorial.

A truly humbling experience

by Charlotte Clayson and Sarah Orr, Year 10 students

WE were selected from St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College, Lanchester, to participate in a government funded trip to the First World War Battlefields in northern France and Belgium.

Before our trip, we visited our local war memorial (St Mary's Blackhill) and researched some of the soldiers who were buried at memorials we were going to visit.

We also found that Sarah had a relative called

William Disberry, whose grave we had the privilege of visiting at Ration Farm Military Cemetery in France, despite it not being on our itinerary. This was a fantastic yet very emotional experience as none of the family had visited it before.

Ulster Tower was one of our favourite sites. Upon arrival, we were guided around the area including Thiepval Wood which contained many reconstructed trenches. The trenches were in the exact place as they were on July 1st 1916, the first day of the Somme. Whilst there, our guide told us that when they were reconstructing the trenches, they found

many of the soldiers' old belongings including spoons, shaving kits and small boxes containing personal items.

Thiepval Memorial was a magnificent place. It was here that we found the names of Michael Haughey a soldier who died on 1st July 1916, the first day of the Somme. He fought for Northumberland Fusiliers and he was from Blackhill. His name was one of 72,000 soldiers who are still missing. The whole experience was incredibly emotional and it was so hard to comprehend the scale of the casualties just on the Western Front in France and Belgium.

In addition to this, we visited numerous military cemeteries such as Lijssenthoek Cemetery and Tyne Cot Cemetery as well as the Menin Gate in Ypres, where Charlotte was given the opportunity to lay a wreath on behalf of schools from Durham and Darlington to commemorate those lives lost in the war.

We also had the opportunity to visit Langemark, a German Cemetery which contained many more soldiers than British and Commonwealth cemeteries but was in a much smaller area with flat gravestones and high walls so the Belgian people could not see in. These soldiers were buried

in mass graves and it was incredibly upsetting to see how German soldiers were treated after death compared to how British soldiers were treated.

We also visited Poperinghe Death, had the opportunity to look at and handle artefacts from the war and to create a lasting memorial sculpture to commemorate a soldier who died in Belgium.

On this trip, we have learnt so much about the harsh realities of war and the bravery of the men of the First World War. It really made us think about how important it is to remember these courageous men and women.



□ Sarah Orr at the grave of her great great uncle William Disberry, Ration Farm Military Cemetery, in France.

Caring students remember the fallen in many moving ways

by Liam Maloney, Year 10

FR Simon Lerche celebrated Mass in St Cuthbert's Catholic High School on Remembrance Day to pray for all of our fallen heroes.

A two minutes silence was observed at 11am throughout the school.

All the students who are in the cadets came in their smartest uniform and Jack Illingworth (Air Cadets) our parade commander led the troop around the Volta block pausing to take a salute for the fallen.

Jack Minto who is in the

Northumberland Scottish Pipes and Drums (year 8) played the bagpipes and led the salute playing Amazing Grace.

It is in the spirit of peace, tolerance, respect and in the name of freedom that we honour those who bravely gave their all so that we can have a better world to live in today, without fear or oppression.

In school we also remember our loved ones who have died and since 1998 our Book of Remembrance is offered up at Mass.



□ Fr Simon Lerche with servers and students of St Cuthbert's High School dressed in the uniforms of their military cadetships.



CHILDREN at St Joseph's Primary School in Newton Aycliffe spent a week taking part in activities to remember loved ones past and present.

Inspired by the nationally observed Remembrance Day, the school has carried on the theme of reflection by creating a special prayer space in its chapel.

All pupils have taken the time to visit the chapel, writing down the names of lost family, friends or pets or drawing pictures of someone close to hang on 'the people tree'.

We decided to use the chapel to set up a prayer station where the children could come together as a class and have quiet reflection time as they moved around each prayer station.

There were various interactive tasks where the children could think about someone special in their lives.

We had an assembly and talked about remembrance before Remembrance Sunday and had a two-minute silence on Remembrance Day.

As well as thinking of people in their lives, the children also reflected on what they were sorry for by writing on a strip of cardboard, what they were thankful for while playing with play dough and what they were worried about while popping bubble wrap.

- Sharon Walker

Schools save the day after food bank is robbed



□ Fr David Smith and children from three schools prepare to deliver provisions to the West End Food Bank, Newcastle.

STUDENTS and staff from St Cuthbert's High School, Newcastle, St John Vianney Primary, West Denton, and St Cuthbert's Primary, in Walbottle, went along with Fr David Smith to the West End Food Bank on the West Road.

Fr David had received a letter from the Food Bank informing him that they had been burgled recently and had lost many of their supplies.

Pupils and staff decided to help out and chose the Food Bank when deciding where to send their harvest donations.

Clublines

Sparks fly on prosecutions

STRONG reactions were sparked by a report on the prosecution of 10 public houses in the North East for screening live football not covered by contract to Sky TV.

This had led to fines of £10,000.

The report was part of the Alliance of British Clubs (ABC) bulletin given to November's national association meeting in North Shields. The debate cautioned clubs not to go down the un-contracted route of screening live football.

But national treasurer Joe Cartwright delivered a forthright comment on the restrictions, declaring his view that it was not illegal to screen live football, only certain copyright logos and promotional material accompanying live transmissions.

He felt national media reports of the prosecutions were being featured in support of the TV company.

He related another North East story of a club visited by a representative of a TV company, producing a photograph of a TV showing football insignia allegedly taken in the club. This was currently being contested, Joe told the meeting.

TWICE-THANKED: Northern Cross won two bouquets during November's national association meeting in North Shields.

First secretary Gary Livett complimented the paper on its comprehensive July report on the Association's AGM in Rochdale. To Clubs Cross' surprise, this was later followed by President Michael Docherty reading out a complete side-story on the effect of the national games on club life. Both officers thanked the Cross for its support of the clubs movement.

NEW LOOK: Rochdale Catholic Club has just completed a re-fit with a complete re-wiring of installations, club chairman Ronnie Rhodes reported. The club was in good shape and "waiting for the new custom to come in," he said.

GAMES HELP: Chris Cawson (Hartlepool Catholic Club) and Ged from Hornden Catholic Club were thanked by President Michael Docherty for their willing help at the national games.

Games in great form but now clubs need secure sponsorship



by Clubs Editor

A REVIEW of the national games – highlight of the Catholic clubs year – has declared the indoor play-offs are in 'great form' and should be continued.

But secure sponsorship for the 2016 competition has still to be agreed, leaving a tiny doubt about their future.

Talks are to continue with potential sponsors after club delegates meeting in North Shields declared their determination that the games should continue – even if it meant being forced to run them every other year.

The National Association of Catholic Clubs meeting was held in North Shields Catholic Club on Saturday, November 21.

Sole sponsor in recent years – the Route Organisation and Associated Church Clubs – reduced their contribution to £1,000 this year. The previous £1,400 budget covered organisation, food and prizemoney for the games.

But as new clubs entering the competition were not covered by the ACC trading agreement, plus a small number of existing members changing arrangements, Route have had to signal that future sponsorship could be at risk.

Two other possible sponsors were named for an approach – CCC Rochdale (cellar cooling equipment) and Carlsberg UK (the new drinks supplier announced by Route to take over on January 1).

And, after a very lively discussion about tournament rules and where the games could be staged, it was agreed to bring the next event to the Cecil Street premises of North Shields Catholic Club.

The debate ranged over current trading in clubs, the important contribution the games have made to the overall health of club membership and participation of members, and the need to share the event among clubs with space and people to run the games successfully.

The review also covered new rules for billiards, snooker, pool and cribbage events – the first three were trailed in May at a meeting of the regional association in South Shields – agreed in the

□ Solidarity expressed here between Rochdale members Steve Jackson and Simon McNicholas on the left and NACC president Michael Docherty and treasurer Joe Cartwright.

summer at the annual meeting in Rochdale. Rochdale Catholic Club weren't happy with the change in a team numbers rule for crib games, but the disagreement didn't emerge until the evening of the games at Hartlepool in October.

That led to an airing of differences during the review in North Shields last month and the air cleared.

Recent games organisers – president Michael Docherty and Brian Marsh, sports secretary at Lindisfarne, Wallsend – listed five clubs with premises and organisational resources capable of staging the games.

These were in South Bank (Middlesbrough), Wallsend, Rochdale, North Shields and Hartlepool.

After debating good reasons for using each of the centres, including the need to alternate the games between the North East and North West, it was agreed without dissent that the 2016 tournament should be held in North Shields Catholic Club.

North Shields officials present said they would need to resolve questions about coach parking, borrowing or hiring pool tables, movement of players between bar, lounge and concert room, and – most important – whether Newcastle United's game was being screened that Saturday.

On this last point, it was agreed not to fix the date of the games until North Shields had settled the question.

It's hoped the games go ahead on either the first or second Saturday next October.

If at first you don't succeed ...



NO DOUBT about the message in this gesture (above) from South Shields men's darts team – they've won the national trophy three times now.

When their picture was squeezed out by lack of space in Clubs Cross last month ... Michael Tiernan put in a quiet word to let the Clubs Editor know how

much the lads had looked forward to seeing their 'three-times' salute.

So here they all are (left-right): John Harte, Michael Tiernan, David Whitehead, John Maughan, Brian Dolphin, John Ramsay and Joseph Tiernan.

It's also a reason to include other champions from the national games.



□ Snooker singles champion James Booth (left) from South Shields beat Ian Johnston (St Peter's, South Bank) in the final.



□ Hartlepool won the billiards trophy and Mick George (right) beat Dave Whitcombe (Rochdale) in the final.

Prayers for Allan

MEMBERS of the National executive of the Catholic Clubs Association stood in silence for a minute in memory of colleague, the late Allan Fitzpatrick, before offering prayers for him at the November 21 meeting in North Shields.

Earlier, at the regional meeting of the North East association that morning, club delegates also offered prayers for Allan.

He was chairman of the regional body and had spent the last two years re-building the group, despite a stroke in the months before his death in August.

SOLUTIONS FOR CROSS-CODEBREAKER AND SU DOKU FROM PAGE 20

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Courses, lectures, conferences and talks

NEW DIOCESAN GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION OF CHILD BAPTISM: This meeting is open to all interested parties, and discussions will inform the writing of the new guidelines. Come along to share your views and current good practice: Thurs Dec 10 St Joseph's, Hartlepool parish hall

JOINT IMEMS/CCS USHAW LECTURE, Tues Dec 15: Prof John Morrill of Cambridge University: 'Celebrating Advent and Christmas in the Penal Times', followed by Ushaw Carol Service. Venue: Ushaw College. Contact ccs.admin@durham.ac.uk

MINSTERACRES: Life in the Psalms - Patrick Woodhouse. Contemporary meaning in ancient texts: how the psalms can be re-imagined for today's contemporary, secular world. Life in the Psalms is the Mowbray Lent book for 2016. Patrick Woodhouse is a writer and Anglican priest. Saturday Jan 23 from 10am - 4pm.

UNDERSTANDING ISLAM: a course with Father Damian Howard at Campion Hall, Oxford. The course is taking place February 8-11, 2016. Cost: £370 which covers all teaching, food and accommodation for this four day course. Anyone interested please contact Diocesan Interfaith Department or contact Katharina Smith Muller directly through email: Katharina.smithmuller@cbcw.org.uk with a short paragraph on why you think that you would benefit from taking part in this course. Deadline for applications: Wednesday 16th December 2015.

TUESDAY EVENINGS AT THE CENTRE FOR PRAYER AND MISSION, SEAHAM

PREPARATION FOR THE YEAR OF MERCY: - how are we going to keep the Year of Mercy? Centre for Prayer and Mission, Seaham.

Dec 8 Mary Mother of Mercy
Please contact Sister Michael on marymichael.lee7@googlemail.com or ☎ 0191 5813249

HEXHAM GALILEE TALKS: Talks on modern day issues in the light of the Christian Faith -All are welcome! to St Mary's Catholic Church, Hecotes, Hexham, NE46 2EB for these talks:

January 15, 2016 at 11 am. Poverty - not a Lifestyle Choice- Steve Forster, Development worker for Together Newcastle - Newcastle Diocese and Churrh Urban Fund.

Feb 20, 2016 at 11am. Science and Religion: Exploring the Spectrum. Fern Eisdon-Baker, principal investigator in the field of Science and Religion, Newman University, Birmingham. Further details of these talks ☎ 01434=603 119

NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY LECTURE: Wednesday March 2, 2016 at 2.15pm in St Andrew's Parish Room, Worswick Street, Newcastle. - Dr James Hagerty: World War 1 Chaplains. The Society welcomes non-members at its lectures, fee £1

Journey in Faith, RCIA courses, etc

ST MICHAEL'S, HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING: Journey in Faith on Wednesday evenings in the Parish Centre.

ST. JOSEPH'S NORTON: Journey in Faith each Saturday in term time at 2 pm in the Thornton Hall. Please contact the Parish Office ☎ 01642 1553816 or e-mail church@stjosephsnorton.org.uk

BIRTLEY: Fr Duffy ☎ 0191-410 2923

WEST DERWENTSIDE CATHOLIC PARTNERSHIP: the partnership consists of St Patrick's, Consett, Our Blessed Lady Immaculate at Blackhill, St Pius X at Moorside and Our

LISTINGS are an essential part of Diocesan life in Hexham & Newcastle - to tell other interested readers what you plan ... and to help busy organisers avoid a clash of dates.

CONTACT: Listings, St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington DL1 2DR, Tel: 01325 464008, or email Bernadette Lawson on: bernadette_lawson@btinternet.com



Lady of the Rosary, Shotley Bridge. Anyone interested should contact Father Andrew Downie at St Patrick's ☎ 01207 502196 or Fr Tom McHale at St Mary's ☎ 01207 502320.

ST CUTHBERT'S, DURHAM: Anybody who would like to know more can contact Andy Doyle on ☎ 0191 378 3660 or andydoyle1066@sky.com Or contact Fr Benjamin Earl OP at St Cuthbert's Church on ☎ 0191 384 3442 or benjamin.earl@durham.ac.uk

WASHINGTON CLUSTER: Fr Mark Milward on ourlady1@btconnect.com ☎ 0191-4163583

Meetings

TEACHING? Are you teaching in a community school and would like to teach in a Catholic school, or perhaps you would like to prepare for a leadership role. Come along to a meeting, where you can talk with officers from the Diocesan Department of Education and other teachers. Meetings are: Tues Dec 8 at St Mary's School, Longbenton, Newcastle NE7 7PE, or on Mon Dec 14 at The Durham Centre, Belmont. Durham DH1 1 TN. Both meetings are from 4.30-5.30pm. Please confirm your attendance by emailing: education@diocesehn.org.uk or ☎ 0191 243 3313.

Youth Events

YOUNG ADULTS' PRAYER GROUP: a group for young adults, between the ages of 18-35-ish, for an hour of praise and worship before the Blessed Sacrament. Meeting on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7.00pm Please meet in St. Mary's Catholic Church in Sunderland City Centre.

More info: Contact: Fr. Marc Lyden-Smith ☎ 0191-567354. After the Holy Hour you are also welcome to join us in a nearby bar for drinks.

THE SOURCE: Young people of Year 9 and above from across the diocese are invited to an event of praise and worship, input, prayer at St Mary's Cathedral, first Wednesday of the month from 7-8.30pm, followed by refreshments. Next meetings Feb 3, March 2 and May 4, 2016

FOR THOSE THINKING ABOUT PRIESTHOOD; aged 16 and over, evenings with an opportunity to listen to speakers talk about their own discernment, faith journeys and vocations, at St Mary's Cathedral, 6.30pm - 8.30pm. Contact Fr David Smith ☎ 0191 2676063 or email stjohnvianneywestdenton@gmail.com

JUVENTUTUM: a chapter of this international youth movement for 18-36 year olds who are attached to the Extraordinary Form has been established at St Joseph's, Gateshead. Further information from Fr Michael Brown ☎ 0191 477 1631

Masses, Retreats, Pilgrimages, Days of Prayer, Services

YEAR OF MERCY: Bishop Seamus will launch the Year

at St Mary's Cathedral on December 8 with Mass at 7.15am and a talk at 10.30 am. The bishop and clergy of the diocese will celebrate Mass at 12.05 pm. There will be Exposition throughout the day and priests to hear confessions between 8am and 8pm - except during the talk and Mass.

On Sunday Dec 13, Bishop Séamus will open the Holy Door at 3pm at the Cathedral.

OPENING THE DOOR OF MERCY: an Advent morning of reflection for the Year of Mercy, led by Kathryn Turner, Head of the Department of Spirituality on Saturday December 12 from 10am - 1pm at St Thomas Aquinas Parish Centre, North Road, Darlington DL1 1PU. Refreshments from 9.30am. To book, or for further information, please contact the Department of Spirituality on ☎ 0191 243 3302, or email: spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk

CAROLS ON NORTHUMBERLAND STREET: the Missionaries of Charity will be singing carols on Northumberland St, Newcastle, beside M&S and Primark, on Saturday Dec 12 at 3pm. All are welcome to join them in this special witness.

MASS WITH ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Second Wednesday of each month at 12 noon at St Joseph's Church, Gateshead, beside Gateshead Metro Station.

PRO-LIFE HOLY HOUR in honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Unborn, on her feast day: Saturday December 12 at St. Andrew's, Worswick Street, Newcastle, at 10.45am -12noon Contact : Marileine ☎ 0191- 285-4395

SERVICE OF HEALING: Celebrating the Mercy of God with Bishop Seamus Cunningham at St Mary's Cathedral Newcastle on Wednesday January 27 at 7pm, It will consist of a penitential rite, the Word of God, adoration and time for prayer ministry and reconciliation.

HEALING SERVICE AND HOLY MASS: Healing service and Holy Mass in English on every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm. Carmel Divine Retreat Centre, Nunnery Lane, Darlington. DL3 9PN

NORTHUMBERLAND LAY CARMELITE COMMUNITY: Prayer, community and service in the Carmelite tradition every third Sunday of the month at St. Aidan's Ashington from 2pm till 4.30pm Visit our website at <http://northumberlandcarmelites.webs.com>

Or email us on: northumberlandcarmelites@outlook.com

SCRIPTURE GROUP: every Friday at St Joseph's, Gateshead at 6pm in the John Ingram Room. All welcome.

ROSARY: every Tuesday morning at 11am at St John Boste, Washington.

ROSARY 2: the fifteen decades recited every Tuesday between 12 noon and 1pm at St Edmund's Chapel, Gateshead. Further information ☎ 0191- 483 6297.

DIVINE MERCY GROUP: meets at St Andrew's Church, Worswick St, Newcastle from

10 - 11.30am on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month.

AFRICAN MASS: at St Joseph's Gateshead. Christmas Mass and party on Sunday December 20 qith a 2pm start. All welcome. In all other months, Mass is on the last Sunday of the month at 2 pm, with refreshments in the Parish Centre afterwards.

MEDJUGORJE AFTERNOON OF PRAYER: Now on the Second Sunday of the month from 4 - 6pm, led by Fr Martin Morris, at St.Aloysius, Prince Consort Road,Hebburn, near Hebburn Metro Station. See website: www.medjugorjene.co.uk

MEDJUGORJE PILGRIMAGE: June 8-16, 2016, flying from Newcastle Cost £499- Spiritual Director Fr Martin Morris. Ring Kath Ash ☎ 01670 733358 or email: www.medjugorjene.co.uk

Social Events, Exhibitions, Concerts, etc

QUIZ AT THE BENE: a quiz will take place in the conservatory at the Benedictine Club, Cramlington on Friday Dec.11, Start at 8.00pm. There will be Festive questions and a glass of wine and the usual raffle. Entry £2.00.

SING AT ST JOSEPH'S, TOW LAW: every Thursday from 7.15-8.15pm. St Joseph's Community Choir, a very friendly happy group of people, enjoy singing in a relaxed environment, and would welcome more members. Social after rehearsal with a cup of tea and light refreshments.

ZUMBA CLASS: St Augustine's Parish Centre, Darlington every Thursday at 6pm. £3.50 per session.

MODERN AMERICAN SQUARE DANCING: St Augustine's parish centre, Darlington, 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month, from 7.30-9.30.. £2 per person.

Contact Linda McDonald ☎ 01325 808180 or email: linda.mcdonald@myaware.org

LINE DANCING: St Augustine's parish centre, Darlington, Fridays at 7.45pm. £ 2.50 per session.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR MUSIC FOR WEDDINGS, etc? Why not contact the group Voices Together, based in Sunderland, and also covering South Tyneside, who sing for charity. They have an extensive repertoire. See their website: www.voicestogether.co.uk for more details and to hear them sing.

Eucharistic Devotions

ST PAUL'S, CRAMLINGTON: Saturday 5pm Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament.

ST DOMINIC'S, NEWCASTLE: On Wednesdays from 2pm until 5pm, and Fridays from 12 midday until 5pm the church is open for Eucharistic Adoration, with Rosary at 3pm.

ST. MICHAEL'S, HOUGHTON LE SPRING: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament one hour before weekday Mass (except Vigil Mass)

ST. MARY'S, EASINGTON LANE: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament half an hour before weekday Mass, except Vigil Mass
CARMEL DIVINE RETREAT CENTRE, Nunnery Lane, Darlington, DL3 9PN

(formerly: Carmel Convent) Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament is held daily in the chapel from 0630 am until 7.30pm. If you wish to gain entry outside these times please arrange it with the Retreat Centre..

Holy Mass in English is celebrated daily Tuesday to Saturday at 07.30 am.

Holy Mass in Syro Malabar is celebrated: Sunday at 09.30 am and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 6.30pm. Bus: Arriva bus service No 3 to Mowden from Darlington Town Centre stops near Carmel Divine Retreat Centre, Darlington. ☎ 01325 - 469400

ST PATRICK'S, RYHOPE: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Thursdays from 2-3pm. All welcome.

ST MARY'S, HEXHAM: Rosary and Benediction every Sunday at 5.00pm - followed by Holy Mass at 6.00pm. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday morning 9.00am - 10.00am followed by Holy Mass.

ASHINGTON, ST AIDAN'S: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Wednesday evening from 7:00-8:00pm and also every Saturday before the Vigil Mass from 4.15 - 5.15pm with an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY, SHOTLEY BRIDGE: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 9.30am every Friday before Mass, at Our Lady of the Rosary, Shotley Bridge.

DURHAM, ST GODRIC'S: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in St Godric's Church, Durham from 3.00-4.00pm on Sundays, also 2.00pm-3.00pm Monday to Saturday, and Thursday morning at 9.30am..

HALTWHISTLE: the church is open each Monday at 10am for 20 minutes for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. All welcome.

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE, PENSHAW: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament each Friday from 9am to 7pm. Evening Prayer of the Church and Holy Mass at 7pm.

IMMACULATE HEART, LOBLEY HILL: adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Tuesdays from 6.30-7pm.

ST PHILIP NERI, DUNSTON: adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Wednesdays 9.30-10am.

ST MARY'S, WHICKHAM: adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Fridays, 9.30-10am.
DURHAM, ST JOSEPH'S: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in St Joseph's Church, Durham on Tuesday evenings from 6.30-7pm.

ALNWICK, ST PAUL'S: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and opportunity for the Sacrament of reconciliation, Saturday morning after Mass at 10.30am - 11am.

ST CUTHBERT'S, HARTLEPOOL: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Monday to Thursday from 7.30am to 8.20am and then Friday from 11am until Mass at 12 noon, including prayers for healing every First Friday.

SACRED HEART, NORTH GOSFORTH: please ring the presbytery for times on 0191 2363182.

WASHINGTON, ST BEDE'S: Confessions and Exposition, Saturday 12 noon until 1.00 pm.

ALL SAINTS, LANCHESTER: each Friday at 6pm there is an opportunity to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, focusing on the Twelfth Station of the Cross.

ST LEONARD'S, SILKSWORTH: Eucharistic Adoration Thursdays from 8.45-9.15am.

ST ROBERT'S, FENHAM: Eucharistic Adoration every Sunday from 6-7pm in the meeting room.

ST PAUL'S, CRAMLINGTON: St. Pauls, Cramlington, Rosary and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, every Friday at 8.40, followed by 9.30am Mass.
ST EDWARD'S, WHITLEY BAY: every Monday to Friday at

St Edward's there is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 9.00am. Morning

Prayer of the Church is said at 9.10am followed by the Rosary for Peace unless there is a Mass or Word and Communion Service in which case the Rosary for Peace will be said afterwards.

ST ANDREW'S, WORSWICK ST, NEWCASTLE: Blessed Sacrament Adoration Monday - Saturday from 11am until 12.10pm, then after Mass until 2pm.

ST PATRICK'S, CONSETT: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament half an hour before each weekday Mass. Also Saturdays 11am-12 noon, and Sundays 5-6pm. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament each first Saturday of the month from 11am - 4pm.

ST MARY'S, BLACKHILL: Exposition every Tuesday morning at 10.30am.

ST PIUS X, MOORSIDE: during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursday mornings, the Rosary is said for the vocation of priests and the sick of the parish

ST JOSEPH'S, NORTON: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday from 2-7pm.

ST JOHN BOSTE, WASHINGTON : Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Tuesday from 6pm until 7pm Mass.

ST AUGUSTINE'S, DARLINGTON: there will be quiet Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament each Monday in St Augustine 's Church from 12 - 3pm.

BLACKHILL, OUR BLESSED LADY IMMACULATE: adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Tuesday from 10.30-11.30am.

ST GREGORY'S, SOUTH SHIELDS: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Tuesday 10-12noon and 6-6.30pm.

ST MARY'S, NEWTON AYCLIFFE: with silent prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, St Mary's is very peaceful and prayerful on Friday mornings from 9am until Mass begins at 10am It's a time when you can share all your cares, hopes and needs with the Lord. All are welcome.

ST MARY'S CONVENT, EBCHESTER: Sundays at 4pm: Holy Hour with Exposition and Benediction; Mondays at 4pm: Holy Hour with Exposition; Thursdays at 4pm: Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. All these prayers are for the intentions of the local communities.

SACRED HEART AND ST JOHN BOSCO, SUNDERLAND: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Saturday 11am - 12 noon.

ST BEDE'S, JARROW: Thursdays in the weekday chapel, 11.45am-12.05pm

DARLINGTON, ST WILLIAM'S: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Wednesday 4 - 5pm. Every 4th Wednesday is an intercessory prayer time for the sick people of the parish, the cluster and friends.

CULLERCOATS: Exposition every day, 7.30am to 7.30pm in Blessed Sacrament chapel at St Mary's.

ST JOSEPH'S, GATESHEAD: adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, first Sunday of every month, 3-4pm.

PRUDHOE: Our Lady and St Cuthbert, Exposition every Sunday, starting 5pm.

ASSOCIATION OF THE EUCHARIST: monthly meeting with an hour's Exposition on 1st Sunday of the month at 3pm at St Joseph's, Gateshead, except in February, June and October when there is a day of recollection. Contact Joyce for details: ☎ 0751-935 2975 or email: joycemid@yahoo.co.uk or contact St Joseph 's presbytery.

Prayer Groups, etc

ST PAUL'S, CRAMLINGTON: Friday 8:30am Rosary & Prayers for the Parish held in St

Peter's School before Morning Mass.

CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP: St Thomas More church, Easington Road, in Holy Family parish, Hartlepool. Monday nights in the church hall - at rear of St Thomas More's - from 7.30-9pm. Great welcome extended to newcomers. More information from Owen McEaney on ☎ 01429-426151.

PRO-LIFE ROSARY at St Cuthbert's, Berwick-upon-Tweed every 1st Saturday at 11.15.

CONFRATERNITY OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL: Monthly prayers at St Cuthbert's, Berwick-upon-Tweed at noon every 1st Saturday of the month. Contact ☎ 0792 212 0467.

NEW PRAYER GROUP: alternative Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm, at 24, Rectory Grove Gosforth NE3 1AL Information ☎ 0191 285 9738

ANAWIM PRAYER GROUP: at St Andrew's, Worswick St, Newcastle, every Monday except Bank Holidays, 2-3pm. Everyone welcome.

INTERCESSION GROUP: St Andrew's. Worswick St., Newcastle, every Tuesday 1.45-3pm, with healing prayer. All welcome.

PRAYER FOR PRIESTS: St Andrew's, Worswick St, Newcastle, every third Sunday of the month from 1.45pm -4pm. Divine Mercy and Rosary are said, with charismatic prayer and praise. All welcome..

ST MARY'S SUNDERLAND: Please note new time: the Most Holy Rosary is prayed for vocations to the priesthood, religious life and laity every Friday at the new time of 11-15 am, at St Mary's Church, Sunderland, that is, before Mass.. Everyone is most welcome..

ST CECILIA AND ST PATRICK, SUNDERLAND: prayer group every Monday at 7pm at St Cecilia's church hall, Ryhope Road, Sunderland SR2 7TG. All welcome.

LECTIO DIVINA PRAYER GROUP AT LANGLEY MOOR: meets every Tuesday at 7pm, ending at approx 8.15pm. We are a Lectio Divina prayer group and we usually pray about the next Saturday/Sunday readings.

We meet at 14 Goatbeck Terrace Langley Moor, opposite St Patrick's Church and School. Everyone is made very welcome. Come and see. For more information contact Halina Holman - the Host Apostolate - on ☎ 0191 378 3114.
PRAYER MINISTRY: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 6-7pm followed by prayer ministry. St Robert's, Fenham NE4 9PH, in the little hall, on the second Sunday of each month.

JESMOND SHRINE: St Mary's Chapel, Reid Park Road, Jesmond. First Sunday of every month at 3pm, Divine Mercy Chaplet and Rosary. All welcome.

ST AUGUSTINE'S, LEAM LANE : Prayer Group, Thursday at 7.15pm in the weekday chapel. Access through presbytery door. All welcome. Exposition, prayer, praise, scripture and petitions. For further details contact Shirley ☎0191 - 469 4051.

PRAYER, PRAISE AND SCRIPTURE: group meets every Wednesday evening at 172 Bamburgh Avenue, South Shields at 6pm. All welcome. Information ☎ 0191-456 3669.

FRIDAY NIGHT PRAYER GROUP 'TRUE LIFE IN GOD': Sacred Heart, North Gosforth.

PIO: a prayer group, under the aegis of St Pio of Pietrelcina, Padre Pio, meets at St Wilfrid's, Gateshead every first Saturday of the month at 4.30pm.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP: Please note - the Novena at St Patrick's, Consett is now every Monday at 7pm.

HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER:

Universal: That all may experience the mercy of God, who never tires of forgiving.

Evangelization: That families, especially those who suffer, may find in the birth of Jesus a sign of true and certain hope.

THE DIOCESAN PRAYER, that we will go forward in hope. Bishop Seamus requests that we say this prayer often.

Glory be to the Father – in whom we live and move and have our being.

Glory be to the Son – whose name we bear and who calls each of us to be his disciples; to build his Kingdom and to go out into the world and bear its fruit. Glory be to the Holy Spirit – pouring out grace and guidance, forming us and renewing us. Inspire us all in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle to live the Gospel, be open to change and move forward together in hope.

PLEASE PRAY for the priests of our diocese who are not well and who need our prayers: Canon Frank Kearney, Father Tony Duffy, Father Ernest Donnelly, Fr Bill Bellamy and especially Fr Michael Corbett.

PRAYERS PLEASE for my wife who has recently received a diagnosis of cancer. **AK**

PLEASE PRAY for all those who have been bereaved this year and for whom Christmas will be a particularly difficult time.

WE ASK Our Lady for her intervention in our son's life. He is an alcoholic and is very ill in mind and body, and needs our prayers so much. Due to his addiction he has been in a lot of trouble with the law. Please pray for him. **EVG**

PLEASE PRAY for Eileen and for her son, who is mentally ill. **Mrs O'B.**

THANK YOU for the prayers for Lawrie, who sadly died last month. His wife and family thank all readers who prayed for his recovery. His suffering is now at an end so may he now enjoy eternal rest. **KA**

PLEASE PRAY for Brian who has Barrett's Oesophagus, that it will not become malignant. **JK**

I ASK your continued prayers for my niece Cecilia who is suffering with severe foot trouble, I also thank those who have prayed for her. She is beginning to recover. **KB**

I ASK PRAYERS for my daughter Julie who has been diagnosed with cancer, that her treatment will be successful. She has recently been widowed. **MH**

PLEASE PRAY for Franca Warrington, who continues to need our prayers after suffering a stroke at her home in Malta. **Northern Cross Board.**

PLEASE PRAY for P who is suffering from depres-

Prayers & Petitions

WELCOME to Prayers and Petitions - a Northern Cross free service to readers.

Please feel able to participate in our open prayers, published here in the hope that our readers will peruse them and add their prayers to yours and ours for the improvement asked for in the published petition.

Write out your prayers or petitions and send them to: Prayers and Petitions, Northern Cross, St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington DL1 2DR.

No payment is required, but please add your name and address to show your good intent. Names and addresses need not be published (unless you wish them to be), but initials are generally a requirement.

A petition may be continued for more than one month, but you will need to indicate if it should continue and supply a telephone number so the topicality of the prayer can be checked.

sion, that he will seek the medical help he needs. **B PLEASE PRAY** for the safety of our troops in all places of conflict throughout the world. **GL**

WE PRAY for all those who work for the well-being of seafarers, particularly those who work with the Apostleship of the Sea. **PLEASE PRAY** for my son Tom who has been out of work for a long time, that he will soon find suitable employment. **GS**

PLEASE PRAY for R, who has just been made redundant from his work, and for all those who lose their livelihood in these difficult times. **I ASK** the prayers of Northern Cross readers for my son who has been diagnosed with cancer, that his treatment will be successful. **Pat G**

PLEASE PRAY for my son Jim who is battling his addiction with drugs, that he will come safely through his treatment, and return to a normal and happy life. **Mum**

LET US PRAY for all families in our diocese so that parents, teachers, catechists and youth leaders will do all in their power to promote prayer in the home. May our families grow in faith and enjoy sharing precious moments together each day, knowing

that the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Rosary are present with them, touching their hearts and bringing peace and healing to our society through family prayer. **SM**

WE THANK GOD for those retired priests of our diocese who forgo their well-earned rest to come and say Mass in many parishes. Lord, give them strength and stamina to continue their valuable ministry to your people. **LET US BE GRATEFUL** for our devoted priests for the chances they provide for Eucharistic Adoration in our churches. Let us pray often for Bishop Seamus Cunningham and all our priests during our prayers of adoration that God will give them his peace and renew their health and strength for their caring work in our diocese. **SM**

TO OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL Our most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, Fruit of the vine, of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, Assist me in my necessity O Star of the Sea. Help and show me herein you are my mother, Queen of Heaven and earth. I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succour me in my necessity There are none that can withstand

your power. O, show me here you are my mother. O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (say 3 times) Holy Mother, I place this call in your hands (3 times). Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine."

This prayer has been sent to Northern Cross by two readers, **DMcN** and **AJHJN**. Its publication was also requested by **MMS**, in thanksgiving for prayers answered and favours received.

PRAYER OF HOPE: O Jesus, who has said, ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door shall be opened unto you, through the intercession of Mary, your most holy Mother, I knock, I seek, I ask that my prayer be granted, (Make your request).

O Jesus who has said, all that you ask of the Father in my name, He will grant you through the intercession of Mary, your most holy Mother I humbly and urgently ask your Father in your name that my prayer be granted. (name your request)

O Jesus who has said "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall not pass," through the intercession of Mary, your most holy Mother, I feel confident that my prayer will be granted (make your request)

Say each day for nine days. **PRAYER TO ST JOSEPH OF CUPERTINO:** Dear St Joseph, who by your prayers did obtain the grace of God to be asked in your examination the only question you knew, grant me success like you in the examination for which I am preparing. In return I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked, O great St Joseph of Cupertino. Grant my request. Amen. **CS.**

LET US PRAY for the people of France who have suffered so much during the recent violent attacks on their capital city of Paris. Please give world leaders the wisdom they need during this time of crisis to handle the situation with great care. **MW**



□ Bishop Seamus Cunningham with confirmation candidates Rohan Fowler (left), Loukas Pavlou and Hannah Bartlett.

Bishop confirms Birtley candidates

ST JOSEPH'S in Birtley had three young parishioners confirmed by Bishop Seamus Cunningham in October.

In order to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation, regular meetings were held in the parish centre to teach Hannah Bartlett, Loukas Pavlou and Rohan Fowler more about confirmation, giving them time to reflect and discuss what their own faith means to them.

The young people found these meetings invaluable in helping them discover more about their faith and the path God may have chosen for them.

Having only three candidates made the

preparation meetings open and relaxed and gave them a more active part in the preparation of the celebration by choosing the readings, hymns and bidding prayers that were significant on their faith journeys including a hymn sang at their Communion day in June 2009, making the celebration personal to them.

The Mass was followed by a celebration, with pizza and cake, in the parish centre, a touching evening for all present.

The candidates send thanks to Margret, Bernadette, Peter, Aeron and Bethany for the fabulous work they did to help them progress further on their Journey of Faith.

Family Guild celebrate alternative hallowe'en

by Paul Hammond

THE Holy Family Guild held its annual All Saints and All Souls event on November 1 at the Sacred Heart and English Martyrs Church in Thornley.

This year the event also included the parish Mass. We had a wonderful array of saints this year - Blessed Miguel Pro, St Alexander Briant, St Maria Goretti, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, St Dominic Savio, St Therese, St Helen, St Olaf, St Joseph, St Bernadette,

Our Lady of the Snows, St Michael, St Robert Southwell, Blessed Francisco of Fatima, St Louis IX and St Juan Diego.

Our saints' parade was followed by a candlelit procession for the Holy Souls. After Mass we enjoyed a bonfire, fireworks, sparklers, mulled wine, sausages and cakes.

● Holy Family Guild meet regularly to share so-

cial time and activities for families and encourage each other in living our Catholic faith.

Our next event will be carol singing and a visit of St Nicholas's in Washington on December 13. If you are interested in receiving our monthly newsletter with details of forthcoming events please email angela@hammond.me or phone 07843 919871.

A little reminder

JUST a little reminder of feasts and days of special prayer during December.

- Dec 3 St Francis Xavier
- Dec 4 St Osmond or St John Damascene
- Dec 6 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
- Dec 7 St Ambrose
- Dec 8 THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, Patroness of the Diocese
- Dec 9 St John Diego
- Dec 11 St Damasus
- Dec 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Dec 13 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
- Dec 14 St John of the Cross
- Dec 20 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
- Dec 21 St Peter Canisius
- Dec 23 St John of Kanty
- Dec 25 THENATIVITY OF OUR LORD Holyday of Obligation
- Dec 26 St Stephen
- Dec 27 THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH
- Dec 28 The Holy Innocents
- Dec 29 St Thoma Becket
- Dec 31 St Sylvester

NORTHERN CROSS OFFICE

St Anne's Presbytery, 43 Welbeck Avenue, Darlington DL1 2DR.

(01325) 464008

Email: k.lynn70@btinternet.com or norcross@btconnect.com

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Sr Philomena is remembered for her kindness and humour

'Sixty years of Service, sixty years of love, sixty years of laughter and tears, filled with friendship, dreams and fears. Spent in the service of the Lord above.'

SISTER Philomena O'Grady FCJ was laid to rest on November 3, 2015, in the Roman Catholic Cemetery of Saint Joseph in Moston, Manchester beside her fellow sisters in Christ.

She was 83-years-old, sixty three of those years spent in the service of her loving saviour as a Faithful Companion of Jesus.

A requiem Mass was celebrated in Our Lady of Dolours Church in Salford. The principal celebrant was Fr Peter Conniffe OSM and he was joined by Fr Phillip Marsh, lately Provincial of the Spiritan Fathers, Fr Adrian Tuckwell her Parish Priest in Hartlepool, Fr Shaun Purdy, and her cousin Fr Tom from Ireland.

Reminders of her long and faithful service were placed on her coffin during the service; her Bible, her copy of the constitution of the FCJ society, a photograph of Philomena with her two sisters Kitty and Mary, both of whom also entered the religious life, a copy of the Northern Cross, a reminder that sister was an excellent sales person for the newspaper, a paper angel made by one of

her great nieces, and an orchid from the caring team at Kersal convent.

She was born Margaret O'Grady in 1932 in Parteen, County Clare, the youngest of Michael and Mary O'Grady's six children: Eddie, Kitty, Patrick, Mary, John and then Margaret – better known as Peggy or Peg to family and friends and, to those of us who knew her later – Sister Philomena.

Margaret arrived at Broadstairs in 1950 and was given the name "Philomena". She progressed through the formation programme as a postulant, then a novice and then a time of temporary profession following first vows before making her final vows in 1958.

During this time she trained as a teacher and, in 1954, was appointed to her first teaching post – an FCJ boarding school – St Monica's, Skipton. She taught there for 14 years and one of her past pupils, Julie Jasper, who remained a close friend to the end, wrote "she is remembered with great fondness by the many pupils she cared for."

"She was noted for her sense of fun and loved to



□ Sister Philomena (second right) at her golden jubilee, with Fr Tom Cunningham, Sister Jo Grainger (who prepared the eulogy for her funeral), then Provincial of the fcJ Order, and Canon Bob Spence.

take some of the boarders out on a Saturday afternoon to the park or up into the hills."

Some of these outings turned out to be quite an adventure.

Philomena's teaching took her to the Cathedral School, Salford and to St Aloysius Infant School in Camden, London where she was the Head teacher.

Then after a year of study in Rome, she taught for a year in the FCJ School in Rhode Island before finally going to Saint Patrick's Church in Hartlepool in 1984 as a parish sister.

There have been numerous tributes to Philomena, especially from the people of St Patrick's, all of them stressing her tremendous love for each person and the part she played in their life – and also acknowledging that "she was not a saint!"

She is remembered for her kindness, love and generosity of spirit – her welcoming smile that greeted everyone as they entered church and her lovely Irish sense of humour which often had parishioners smiling and forgetting their troubles.

Fr Seamus McGivern,

who appointed her as Parish Sister, spoke of her self-sacrifice – "she was seen as someone who gave herself to others."

Fr Adrian Tuckwell recalled that Philomena enjoyed telling jokes, that she liked things to be put away – not always in the right place which could frequently lead to confusion – and that she loved the garden, often spending time there in the summer at the end of a long day.

One of the first things he said was that when Philomena left Hartlepool no-one realized how much she had quietly done – it was only when the question "who does this?" was asked that the answer was consistently "... That was Philomena".

But it's not for all the "hands on work" that Philomena did that she is missed – it was her loving presence and her care for each person.

Philomena's move to Kersal Convent happened faster than expected but had proved necessary as the pain, which she had suffered from for many years, increased and proved difficult to control. She quickly grew to love the community and the carers and to

appreciate the companionship and care she received from them all.

Although that move was four years ago, the people in Hartlepool never forgot her or really "let her go" – phone calls, letters, visits, all kept her well-informed of the people she had taken to heart.

As at the beginning of her life, where the family was important to Philomena, so it was at the end.

She was the last remaining member of her immediate family, but she rejoiced always in the friendship she had with Teresa, her sister-in-law, and her family.

She looked forwards to the weekly phone calls from her cousin Martine, they were, in fact, a highlight in her life, especially after the death of her brother, John.

We can only now be grateful for Philomena that all the pain she endured is ended and she is reunited with those she loved so much. We know that she now enjoys the fullness of eternal life with Jesus, her Faithful Companion.

- by David Frank, with additional reporting by Sister Jo Grainger

Vincent's passing ends 100 years of family organist duties

THE ORGAN at St Patrick's Church, Ryhope, was played for almost 60 years by a man who died on October 27 at the age of 82.

Vincent Johnston used his talents to accompany Masses and other services from a young age, taking over the task from his father, who had performed the same duty for 40 years.

Vincent died very peacefully at home after a long illness, with his wife Teresa by his side, praying him into eternity. She said she had offered prayers to St Joseph, patron of a happy death, as well as prayers for the dying. Just that morning, Vincent had received Holy Communion and was at peace.

His Requiem Mass was held at St Patrick's on November 5.

The church was filled with Vincent's family and many friends, and the Mass was offered by parish priest Fr Robert Kinlen and Fr Bernard Finan, assisted by Deacon Norman Barron.

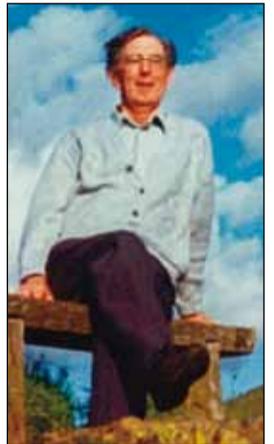
Fr Kinlen said the last verse of the opening hymn Blessed Assurance says what Vincent would wish to say to us – "All is at rest", "watching and waiting, lost in his love." He said that Vincent would be experiencing this joy and peace.

The St Patrick's choir came out of retirement to sing for him, their repertoire including the motet In Paradisum, and some of Vincent's favourite hymns. Deacon Norman delivered the tribute prepared by Vincent's family.

"Vincent was born in 1933 to Bart and Ethel Johnston, the youngest boy in a family of 10.

He was born and bred in Ryhope, attending St Patrick's school, where he was on the football team. He left school at 14 and worked as a plumber. He trained as a piano tuner at Gordon Eades' shop in Sunderland, doing his National Service in Germany. He met Teresa at

He met Teresa at



□ Vincent Johnston.

Wetherell's dance hall in 1955 and they were married in 1958.

The couple were blessed with five children – Anne, Keith, Stephen, Loretta and Philip, and they had 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

For more than 30 years Vincent worked as a staff nurse at Cherry Knowle psychiatric hospital.

In his spare time and retirement he enjoyed football, cricket and horse-racing, at which he had some success. He also enjoyed walking in the Lake District with his family.

Norman added: "But Vincent's main passion was music, ranging from Mozart to Chas and Dave. He spent hours tuning and playing his piano and the church organ.

"He dedicated his life to Teresa and their children. He prided himself on being prompt, reliable and courteous."

Vincent's family gave the readings and bidding prayers and his grandchildren carried the offertory gifts.

After Mass, Vincent was laid to rest in Ryhope Cemetery. Family and friends gathered at St Patrick's Club, of which Vincent was a founder member, to share their memories of this great man of music.

Bernadette Lawson.

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Ovation for Eileen's choir friends at her funeral

NEVER in Northern Cross extensive coverage of funerals has a family stood and applauded towards the end of a Requiem Mass.

It happened after Communion in St Joseph's church, Hartlepool last Friday (Nov 27) during the funeral of Eileen McConnell.

Forty of her friends in Hartlepool Ladies Choir had just helped lead the communion hymn Be Still and Know I Am With You and followed it with a beautiful rendition of The Prayer – one of Eileen's favourites.

They – and organist Brenda Harrison – were stunned when, spontaneously, Eileen's whole family stood up at the front of church to give the choir and its musical director David Gibson a standing ovation.

Celebrant Fr Michael Purtil took it in his stride, commenting on the appreciation. It was in keeping with Eileen's style and quickness to respond, he said later.

Fr Purtil, now in North Kenton, Newcastle, was a good friend at Hartlepool St Teresa's of Eileen and her late husband, Terry, who died in 1990.

He brought the 400-plus mourners to life, announcing Eileen had made him promise that if he celebrated her requiem he would preach for 45 minutes.

He told the family: "Tough! That's what your mother asked for – and that's what you're going to get!" ... confessing the 45 minutes would be compressed into two.

Fr Purtil – in homily and later eulogy – spoke warmly about Eileen's example, living life to the full. Her funeral was a thanksgiving Mass, he said, with much to give thanks for as Eileen was involved in so much for her to shine that baptismal light – always personal help; always with her personal stamp on it.

"That's the life we give thanks for," said Fr Purtil – one that gave witness to who she was – a great, strong, dedicated, loving lady.

Born in Downpatrick, Northern Ire-



□ Eileen McConnell pictured in July this year after a farewell concert at St Teresa's Church before it closed. Eileen was publicity officer for Hartlepool Ladies Choir.

land, where her parents Hugh and Mary Mullen ran a pub, Eileen had many character-forming experiences, including boarding school and travelling to London with her sister Marie to train as a nurse.

One of six children – two sisters and three brothers, Eileen was the last of them.

She met RAF engineer husband Terry when back in Downpatrick – at 'the Canon's hall' – where Terry asked the doorman to point out the best dancer in the room. "Ahh," said the man: "There's only one real dancer in the hall."

They were married in St Joseph's, Hartlepool in 1954. Thereafter, said Fr Purtil: "They were always the best dancers in the room – a loving, deep, permanent relationship."

She was a natural-born host and a quick and generous cook.

Eileen loved to dress well and when Terry died she determined not to become 'an old widow' but to carve herself a new life, expanding into flower-arranging, line-dancing, sewing and the ladies choir, for whom she took on the role of publicity officer.

She was first a great grandmother. Her great grandson, 10-month-old Benjamin was at the funeral.

Eileen was a member of St Joseph's Women's Guild, St Teresa's bowls and sewing groups and The Oddfellows. She loved Frank Sinatra.

She was outspoken and got involved in her community, writing to council and police about road developments and public safety – and spoke up for St Teresa's church before it was closed.

Eileen was a member of Hartlepool & District evening flower-arrangers club – chairperson Cath Crawford and members of the 79-strong club were in church.

Son Ian, son-in-law Steve Janes, and grandsons Oscar McConnell and Dominic Janes carried her coffin into church, six grandchildren read bidding prayers, and daughters Susan and Elaine brought up Offertory gifts, while granddaughter Sara Turnbull read from Ecclesiastes: "... a time for every occupation under heaven."

A happy reception was held at Hartlepool's Historic Quay, where flower club members provided a magnificent arrangement for the room.

Beautiful flowers in St Joseph's were arranged by Pat Liddle and team members Mary Windram, Clare Groves, Alice Johnson and Eileen Bowron – with Margaret and Philip Robinson arranging two huge crosses made by Terry brought from St Teresa's.

Donations were accepted for the stroke unit at North Tees General Hospital.

May she rest in peace.

- John Bailey

Parish mourns a 'wonderful teacher'

THE REQUIEM Mass took place on November 4 of a well-known and loved Sunderland teacher and loyal and hard-working member of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

St Benet's Church in Monkwearmouth was packed for the funeral of Jack Blackburn, who died on October 24 aged 80.

Jack's parents were Jack and Doris Blackburn who lived in St Cecilia's parish, and from an early age Jack and his younger sister Theresa were set an example of service to the Church.

Jack was educated by the Jesuits at Corby School, which later became St Aidan's. While in sixth form he went for his medical for National Service and was sent to Shotley Bridge hospital where part of one of his lungs was removed.

Instead of joining the Air Force, as he had hoped, he went to St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill to train as a teacher.

His first post was at St Hilda's primary school, where he was proud to have taught Jimmy Montgomery, the goal-keeping hero of the 1973 cup final.

When St Thomas Aquinas comprehensive school opened, Jack transferred



□ Jack Blackburn

there and stayed until it sadly closed 25 years later, being redeployed to St Robert's in Washington until his retirement.

Many of his former pupils attended his requiem, and several put appreciative messages on the Sunderland Echo on-line obit page, expressing their respect, thanks and admiration for a "wonderful teacher".

Jack met his wife Maureen when they were both members of St Benet's Operatic Society. They were engaged after seven weeks and married six months later in 1964, a marriage which lasted 51 years.

They had four daughters: Helen, Jane, Clare and Anne, and six grandchildren: Adrian, Laura, Rebecca, Grace, Jack and Alex. Jack's three sons-in-law and three grandsons carried his coffin at the funeral.

Jack was a fervent football fan. Watching the 1973 cup final on television, Jack got so excited when Porterfield scored that he leapt into the air and pulled down the light fitting.

Daughter Helen, who paid tribute to her Dad, said: "Dad joined the St Vincent de Paul society in St Cecilia's parish when he was 17. When he got married he transferred to St Benet's conference and remained a member for 63 years. At the time of his death, Jack was Conference treasurer.

He believed in helping others and was involved in the camps at Holy Island and making up parcels for those in need at Christmas.

"He visited Holy Cross home for many years. He went every Wednesday to visit parishioners and took them boxes of sweets."

St Benet's parish priest, Fr Oliver Keyes, praised Jack's work at St Benet's. He said Jack was always there to help and never refused any request for help or advice. "Jack was the kind of parishioner any priest would be glad to have," he said. "I feel privileged to have had him in the parish. He has been such a great support and we will miss him very much."

- Bernadette Lawson.

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CATHOLIC FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF SUNDERLAND

Birthdays

BAILEY: Scarlett is SEVEN on December 28 – hope it's a happy red Christmas and then happy birthday, big Sis. Love from Nana and Poppa

CLARK: good luck with your travel adventure Fi. Hope you are in a good, safe place for December 14. Happy birthday and love from a.Maureen & u.JohnB

OLIVER: Nathan, brilliant to see you at the Royal Albert Hall and the night before. Hope you find another lively gig at Glastonbury or Reading 2016. Happy birthday on December 18, Love – Nana and Poppa

REARDON: Dorothy – double-love greetings for a happy Christmas Day birthday! Thanks for great shared day out in York this summer. Lots of love, Maureen and JohnB

KINLEN: Fr Robert ... we know it's early December, but not quite sure of the date. Have a happy birthday anyway! St Cecilia's CWL.

MENDEZ: Margaret: wishing you a very happy day on December 14. Don't forget the wine next day for the CWL. Love, Bernadette and David.

HINDLE: Amanda: Happy birthday to a lovely granddaughter and niece, December 22. Lots of love, Grandma and Uncle David.

HINDLE: Amanda. Happy birthday Millie on December 22. Lots of kisses and cuddles from Isabelle.

ERSKINE: Stephen. Happy birthday on December 26, Steve. Looking forward to toasting your health in honey rum at Thistle Cottage!. Your favourite sis Bernadette, and nephew Davie

In Memoriam

Clergy of Hexham & Newcastle Diocese

REMEMBER in your prayers those priests of Hexham & Newcastle Diocese

Family announcements are always welcome in your Classified Cross

PERSONAL messages and announcements are welcomed from readers. These will be listed under classified headings each month. Pre-payment at the rate of 28p a word, inclusive of VAT, is requested. But an invoice can be sent to advertisers if requested in advance. Particularly welcome will be any acknowledgements, announcements of births, deaths and marriages, public notices, thanksgivings and intercessions.

whose anniversaries are this month Dec 2: Rev Thomas Oswald; Dec 3: Rev Joseph Marshall; Dec 5: Rev Leo Sharratt, Rev John F Kennedy; Dec 6: Rev Hames Thompson; Dec 7: Rev Daniel Costar; Dec 8: Rev Bernard Smith; Dec 9: Rev Robert Thornton; Dec 11: Rev Edward V Marron; Dec 12: Rev Francis Dunne; Dec 13: Rev Terence Kerr; Dec 15: Rev Gerard McElhannon; Dec 17: Rev Oswin Moody; Dec 18: Rev James hardy; Dec 20: Rev Herbert Armstrong; Dec 23: Rev Robert Elliott; Dec 25: Rev Martin Cahill, Rev Benedict Carey; Dec 27: Rev George Forster; Dec 29: Rev John Milroy; Dec 30: Monsignor Philip Cronin, Rev Daniel Treacy. May they rest in peace.

Roll of Honour

Please remember the following in your prayers.

NOVEMBER

- 1970 Percy Holwell
- 1992 Eddie Cummings
- 1996 Peter Moorhead

2004 Dennis Cunningham

2008 Michael Morris

DECEMBER

- 1988 Mgr Philip Cronin
- 1989 Joe Cummings
- 1993 Philip Crowe
- 1996 Ken Hughes
- 1999 Anne Crowe

JANUARY

- 1991 Jim Hunt
- 1992 Tom Smyth
- 2003 Fr Michael Finnigan
- 2005 Kevin McGuckin
- 2009 Bishop Hugh Lindsay
- 2009 Alan Petterson

Latest Roll of Honour is available from the Northern Cross office on 01429 274305

Wanted

PEDAL GO-KART, 3-6 years, any condition Grandad will fix. Please ring 0191 4175170 with price and address.

Boot Sale

ARMCHAIR Boot Sale is well set in its new format now and firmly part of the expanding Cross Classified pages. Items for Boot Sale are welcomed and will appear free of charge with the only restrictions being:

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VINTAGE UKULELE, green with cover. Excellent condition, cost £35 will accept £25. Tel Hartlepool 01429 273876

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CHARLIE BEARS cute 12" bunny. New with bag, Bargain £20 – Newcastle 07922120467

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FIGARO 9ct gold chain, 18", boxed new, £20 – Newcastle 0792212467

CELTIC cross, 9ct gold with small emerald stone, very good condition, £12 – Newcastle 07922120467

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0191 5866250
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BISHOP'S ENGAGEMENTS

Rt Rev Séamus Cunningham Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Engagements for December 2015

- Tuesday 1st December**
10.00 am Diocesan Board of Directors Meeting at St Hilda's Resource Centre
- Wednesday 2nd December**
Northern Bishops' Meeting at Bishops' House, Leeds
- Thursday 3rd December**
7.00 pm Mass at St Oswald's, South Shields for 50th Anniversary
- Friday 4th December**
9.30 am Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's House
- Saturday 5th December**
6.00 pm Mass at St Charles, Tudhoe for Visitation
- Sunday 6th December**
10.00 am Mass at St Charles, Tudhoe for Visitation
- Tuesday 8th December**
Opening of the Year of Mercy at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle:
7.15 am Mass
10.30 am Talk
11.15 am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
12.05 pm Concelebrated Mass with Diocesan Clergy
- Wednesday 9th December**
6.00 pm Sixth Form Advent Service at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
- Thursday 10th December**
7.00 pm Mass of Thanksgiving for Fr Dermott Donnelly's Service to the Youth Ministry Trust at Emmaus Youth Village
- Friday 11th December**
11.00 am Mass at Carntyne, Hexham for Sisters of Mercy
- Saturday 12th December**
11.00 am Attending Inauguration of Bishop Christine Hardman, as Bishop of Newcastle, at St Nicholas Cathedral, Newcastle
- Sunday 13th December**
9.30 am Mass at St Osmund, Gainford for Visitation
3.00 pm Opening of the Holy Door at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
- Tuesday 15th December**
11.00 am Attending Ushaw Trustees Meeting at Hinsley Hall
7.00 pm Confirmations at St Mary's, Hexham
- Wednesday 16th December**
6.30 pm Social Evening with Vocations Group at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
- Thursday 17th December**
7.00 pm Attending Carols by Candlelight at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
- Friday 18th December**
9.30 am Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's House
- Saturday 19th December**
12.00 pm Penitential Service at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
5.30 pm Mass at St Mary's, Bishop Auckland for Visitation
- Sunday 20th December**
9.30 am Mass at St Wilfrid's, Bishop Auckland for Visitation
11.00 am Mass at St Mary's, Bishop Auckland for Visitation
- Thursday 24th December**
8.00 pm First Mass of Christmas at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
- Friday 25th December**
10.15 am Mass at Durham Prison

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COMMUNION-1: full length dresses, white with delicate detail on both, sizes age 7 and 10. Purchase price £130 each will accept £50 each – Rothbury 01669-622903

UK government pledges to match appeal funding

ANN-MARIE Ablett is a volunteer nurse with Orbis, a charity that prevents and treats avoidable blindness.

For over 12 years, this selfless woman has dedicated her holiday time to working with nurses in developing countries.

So far, Ann-Marie has been on 29 sight-saving missions and has no intention of stopping.

It's estimated she has seen over 1,000 patients and trained hundreds of nurses during this time.

Ann-Marie is currently running an appeal called Vision for Zambia – go to: www.visionforzambia.org.uk.

Until February 3, the UK government will dou-

ble all public donations, helping children suffering from preventable blindness in the country.

In Zambia, thousands of children every day are missing out on education and play because of eye diseases like cataract. And unless it's caught in time, this treatable disease can lead to irreversible damage and a life of unnecessary blindness, something Ann-Marie has witnessed herself during her six trips to the country with Orbis.

Mwemba is one of the lucky ones. He was just five when he began to notice his sight was fading. Eventually he was forced to leave school. His cataract was so bad he

couldn't see his friends let alone the blackboard.

Fortunately for Mwemba, a visiting uncle noticed a cloudy pupil in his eye and told the family about Zambia's only paediatric eye care centre, supported by Orbis.

Mwemba's family made the long journey to Kitwe Eye Annexe and Mwemba had surgery to remove the cataract.

Mwemba was so excited when his bandages were removed. He immediately grabbed the nearest pen and began to practice his writing.

He had forgotten a few things, but couldn't wait to get back to school and see his friends.

Mwemba's case is by no

means unique – 90 per cent of people with avoidable blindness live in developing countries where access to eye care is severely limited. In countries like Zambia it can take days on foot to reach the nearest hospital. This is why Orbis is now pioneering new ways of reaching isolated rural communities and educating them about eye health, so that we can prevent blindness in even more children.

By supporting this cause, alongside the UK government who will double your donation, Orbis will be able to save the sight of twice as many children like Mwemba, before it's too late.



□ Nurse Anne-Marie Ablett, who works for Orbis to help prevent and treat blindness in developing countries and is now spearheading the fund-raising appeal, Vision for Zambia.

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Billingham brothers rock world of karate



□ Champion Brett Billingham, left.

THE Billingham brothers have set a great example to all students at Cardinal Hume Catholic School and their story of commitment and success is one to be celebrated.

Brothers, Brett and Ross, have immersed themselves successfully in the art of karate.

They decided to take up the discipline seven years ago and train on average three nights a week at Sonkei Shotokan Karate Club at Heworth Grange School.

In addition they make the occasional weekend trip to Liverpool for further training. The brothers are committed to the karate cause.

In 2013 Brett and Ross were delighted to be chosen to represent England as part of the KUGB (Karate Union of Great Britain). A great honour and success in itself.

Brett's greatest success was more recent as he was selected to represent England at the WSKA (World Shotokan Karate-do Association) championships 2015 in Bielsko Biala, Poland.

A competition that gathered to-



gether the best Shokotan Karate warriors in the world.

Brett flew out in September and trained for three days before the two day event. The end result being that Brett achieved bronze in the 'Cadet Mens Team Kumite'. A valiant effort and great achievement.

Well done Brett. Indeed well

done Brett and Ross for all your successes and achievements in Shotokan karate-do and showing what hard work and dedication can achieve.

Karate is defined specifically as karate-do which translates as way of the open hand.

It is a martial art with a history that traces its roots back to Japan.

□ Brett Billingham in action at the World Shotokan Karate-do Association championships, 2015, in Bielsko Biala, Poland.

Shotokan is a style of karate that draws on a number of martial arts and was founded by Gichin Funakoshi (1868-1957). Once the preserve of young men and women in the Far East, it has made its way as a popular and successful physical discipline to the North East.

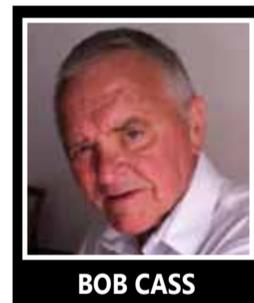
Funakoshi laid out the philosophy of Karate in his "Twenty Principles of Karate". With a Zen backdrop to this physical discipline the principles allude to notions of humility, respect, compassion, patience, and both an inward and outward calmness. The aim of karate is that as you develop your physical skill you also develop yourself as a person. From these principles come the five philosophical rules for training: seek perfection of character, be faithful, endeavour to excel, respect others, refrain from violent behaviour.



□ Brothers Brett and Ross Billingham and the Sensei. Male members of the England squad who fought so well in Poland.



Sound football sense from a taxi driver called Walt



BOB CASS

THE black and white scarf, pom-pom hat and magpie emblems stuck on the window of his vehicle were a bit of a giveaway.

Walt, the taxi driver who ferried me across Newcastle recently, was indeed a died in the wool United fan.

His attire and decorations begged conversation. I mean you just couldn't sit in the back of Walt's taxi and say nowt. What I didn't know and was shortly to find out was that he was also something of an econ-

omist with a remedy for the team's current ills which, to me, sounded devastatingly simple.

Walt did not need letters after his name to offer billionaire Mike Ashley the benefit of his academia which went something like this: "Mike, the only way you're gonna improve Newcastle is to sign better players because the ones we've got now are going to get us relegated."

Walt then explained how he would pitch his football ideology to the club's

owner should he ever get the back of his cab.

"It seems to me that, if it is going to cost each one of the three teams who get relegated at the end of the season, around £120million, spending that much, or even something close to it, in the January transfer window on players who could keep them up would make sense."

That, along with something less complimentary and more colourful, was the more constructive of his suggestions for improvement.

We parted with Walt still flogging his dead horse; still hoping for the miracle his team look like they're going to need if it means persuading Ashley to change his football policy, because the sports goods entrepreneur can back up his promises of investing hard cash in the transfer market with some impressive figures.

Newcastle were the fifth biggest net spenders in European football last summer and the second biggest in the Premier League. Their net outlay of £52.6million was topped only by Manchester City

'When you think of the list of recent managers who have been afforded the task of achieving respectability at both Sunderland and Newcastle, you have to wonder at the criminal lack of good judgement on the part of their owners.'

(£101.3million) in the Premier League while, in Europe, only Valencia, AC Milan and Paris Saint Germain spent more.

So it begs the obvious question, where is the cash being wasted?

The finger of suspicion is undoubtedly being pointed at managing director Lee Charnley and head of player recruitment Graham Carr. Having said that, it is also crystal clear that Ashley's current policy of not signing a player over the age of 25 is just not working.

The dressing room may be populated with young foreigners whose better days are yet to come, underlining Ashley's avowed intention to buy cheaply and hopefully reap the rewards of their development by selling at a profit. But

Newcastle's needs are now – something Ashley does not seem to appreciate.

The United side is crying out for experience; for players with a Premier League past who can fill the key positions.

They need two defenders, including an old fashioned centre-half, two midfielders and a striker – five recruits which, because they need to be good enough and much better than what they have already, will cost a total of anything up to £50million – cheap at the price when one considers the reward for finishing out of the bottom three is more than twice that amount.

If there is a marked difference in the resources at their respective disposal, Sunderland are in a slightly better situation than their

Tyneside neighbours. They have a few more players who have been around the block – but, even more important, they have at the helm a gnarled veteran of many a Premier League battle in Sam Allardyce.

When you think of the list of recent managers who have been afforded the task of achieving respectability at both Sunderland and Newcastle, you have to wonder at the criminal lack of good judgement on the part of their owners.

Ashley was in charge for no time at all before he decided Allardyce was not up to the job of managing the Magpies.

It was a decision he has had cause to rue on many occasions since – not that he seems to be in the least bit bothered. When one is

as wealthy as he is, you don't have to be.

Applying the illogical rules of sliding doors, it's fair to say that big Sam's record since, at Blackburn and West Ham, might indicate Newcastle would have fulfilled his pledge to establish the club as one well established in European competition.

Avoiding relegation with Sunderland at the end of this season would be Sam's biggest achievement yet, especially if he is allowed to shop around in the January transfer market.

Addressing the current situation at the bottom of the Premier League table, it would seem unlikely the two neighbours would both beat the drop. With half the season left, of the two my money would be on Sunderland to escape.

That is unless Mike Ashley happens to hail a taxi driven by a guy called Walt!

● Bob Cass is a member of Durham Martyrs parish. He has covered top class football throughout an illustrious career as a sports journalist.

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