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# Hallam Bridge



ISSUE #  
007

A Community called to love one another as Christ loves us.

## Fruits of the Synod 2023

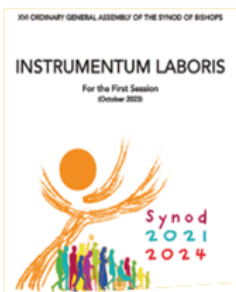


The Instrumentum Laboris is released in Rome as Hallam meets to consider the fruits of the synod.

As we move towards summer holidays, there are some exciting events and invitations happening for Catholics in Hallam and in the world. Another step along the synodal path came with the press conference announcing publication of the 'Instrumentum Laboris' or Working Document for the Bishops to use as their guide when they meet in October for the first of two 'Synod on Synodality' events scheduled for October 2023 and October 2024. The link to the video of the press conference and to the document is on the diocesan website and Twitter. We report on Hallam Fruits of Synodality meeting with Bishop Ralph on Saturday 17 June. Bishop Ralph reflected that it was all God's work and synodality is ongoing, the way of being the church of the 21st Century and a powerful direction forward for which we give grateful thanks. All are invited to learn, listen, discern and continue on this synodal Way. Three other invitations this month are to join Padley Pilgrimage on 9 July, to go and see the beautiful Little Bits of God mosaic exhibiting in St Michael's Wombwell this summer, and hear from Fr John Cooke about his Big Lent Walk with Oscar with invitation to sign a 'Seeds for All' letter and to think about how your parish groups can plan for Season of Creation 1 September to 4th October. Let us know what you get planned. In other news, we hear about how our refugee family have found the year, we pray for the repose of the soul of Fr Patrick O'Connor and meet the Deacons and the new Cafod Education Coordinator; we will feature more individual 'Getting to know...' interviews and biographies in future editions. We give thanks to God for the gifts of lay ministries shared with us all, and this was celebrated with Mass at St Charles' Church on Saturday 3 June. We give thanks also for the steadfast work of the UCM who this month gave a gift to support Youth Ministry. There will be one more edition of Hallam Bridge in July, and none published in August as staff take a summer break.



A series of talks has been arranged at St Michael's Church, Wombwell whilst the Little Bits of God Mosaic is on display between 10 July to 29 September  
*Journeying Together, page 4*



Home from Home Hallam looks back on a year of support for a refugee family.



*Journeying Together, page*

On Tuesday 20 June, the Vatican published the Instrumentum Laboris, the working document outlining the focus and method for the Synod on Synodality meeting in Rome in October 2023 and October 2024. Only two days earlier a group met with Bishop Ralph to consider some of the fruits of the synodal process in the diocese. Read more about it on page 2.



Inter-diocesan Padley Pilgrimage  
9 July 2023

In honour of the Padley Martyrs Blessed Robert Ludlam & Blessed Nicholas Garlick

Assemble at Grindleford Station for Procession to the Chapel at 3:00 PM

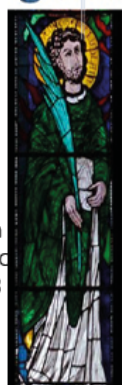
Mass commences at 3:30 PM

President: Rt. Rev. Ralph Heskett CSsR Bishop of Hallam

Preacher: Rt. Rev. Patrick McKinney Bishop of Nottingham

Hourly trains from Manchester and Sheffield Buses from Sheffield Interchange - High Peak Route 65 S32 21A for Sat-Nav

Pilgrims are welcome to arrive early and picnic in the grounds



## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

### Fruits of the Synod “For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission. 2021-2024 in Hallam” – one year on



This time last year, we in Hallam had begun the process of gathering for synodal meetings, to reflect together on the questions asked by Pope Francis in October 2021. We met in person, we responded to surveys, we filled in postcards and sent them to Bishop Ralph or directly to Rome. We collected all the responses and wrote a Hallam diocesan response, which was incorporated with the responses from all the other dioceses in England and Wales, into the document sent by the Bishop's Conference to Rome. This was synthesised with submissions from 112 Bishop's Conferences, into the Document of the Continental Stage, produced in October 2022 by the Vatican Synod office, and entitled “Enlarge the Space of your Tent” and which was followed between January and March 2023, by a series of Continental Synodal Assemblies.

On Tuesday 20 June, the fruits of these assemblies was published as the Instrumentum Laboris, the working document outlining the focus and method for the Synod on Synodality meeting in Rome in October 2023 and October 2024. More on this next month.

For us in Hallam, having been involved in the opening processes of the Synod, it was time to take stock, and reflect on our journey through the year, in the diocese, in the parish and personally. Pope Francis is inviting us to be a synodal church, which doesn't mean one-off events but a method of journeying together as the People of God which conveys communion, participation and mission, through listening and discernment, listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit heard especially in the voices of the

marginalised.

So on Saturday 17th June, there was a meeting at the Pastoral Centre to look back over our synodal efforts of the past year and consider some ways for the diocese to journey onwards.

Some of the reflections and suggestions that emerged from the meeting were about relationships between priest and laity. There were suggestions about how to plan for and improve these relationships particularly where there are differences in understanding about the nature of the priesthood and authority in the church. The popularity of the synodal method of encounter and listening was clear particularly in the eagerness to use the method ongoing in parish meetings and particularly where there is disagreement and conflict.

the full article is available on our website

### Instrumentum Laboris (working Document) of XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS (4-29 October 2023).



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

The working document was released on 20 June 2023 in Rome. It can be accessed in a variety of formats on the Vatican's Synod office here and in pdf version below

As Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Synod said at the launch, "The Instrumentum Laboris is also an



## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

opportunity for the entire People of God to continue the journey that has begun, and an opportunity to involve those who have not been involved so far,"

## Fr Patrick O'Connor RIP



10th October 1940 – 18th June 2023

Fr Patrick O'Connor

Honorary Chaplain of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

Pilgrimage Director 2008-2016

Retired Parish Priest of Balby & Edlington

Former parish priest of St Theresa's, Sheffield

We are sad to announce that Fr Pat O'Connor died Sunday 18th June 2023, shortly after receiving the sacraments and praying the Glorious mysteries. Fr Pat was Pilgrimage Director from 2008 to 2016, and has been part of our pilgrimage family for over 30 years as a dedicated Chaplain & Hotel Co-ordinator. He was appointed an Honorary Chaplain of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes by the Bishop of Tarbes & Lourdes in recognition of his contribution to the shrine. When we couldn't travel to Lourdes in 2020, and couldn't even gather together in Church, we had a "Virtual Pilgrimage". Fr Pat loved the Torchlight Procession, so there was only one person to ask to lead that, recorded by Zoom.

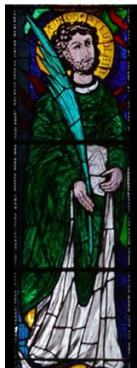
May he rest in peace, and rise in glory.

See the video via the link on our website

## Padley Pilgrimage 2023



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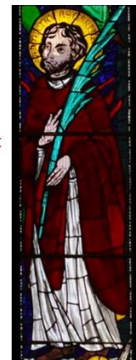
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Pilgrims are welcome to arrive early and picnic in the grounds



## An opportunity to deepen our faith and love of the Bible through the visual medium



A series of talks has been arranged at St Michael's Church, Wombwell whilst the Little Bits of God Mosaic is on display between 10 July to 29 September 2023.

In the first, Fleur Dorrell who commissioned 'Little Bits of God' mosaic as part of the God who Speaks initiative will be offering guided tours of this unique Artwork, sharing its story from the beginning, and how it inspires us to deepen our

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

faith and love of the Bible through the visual medium.

The talk will be aimed at a small group of about 15 people and will take place on Wednesday 19 July at 2:30 pm. It will be repeated at 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM and again on Thursday 20 July at 10:30 AM. To book for this event visit the parish website [here](https://corpuschristi.hallam-diocese.com/) <https://corpuschristi.hallam-diocese.com/> or via [mosaic.wombwell@gmail.com](mailto:mosaic.wombwell@gmail.com) or by calling the office number 01226 752372.

Fleur is the Catholic Scripture Engagement Manager for the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales and the Bible Society. She is currently the National coordinator of the God Who Speaks initiative.

## Called to Serve



The Permanent Deacons of the Diocese gathered at the Pastoral Centre with Bishop Ralph and Fr Michael Umameh, the newly appointed Director of Deacons. Our Deacons shared in fraternity the joy of their ministry as differently expressed in the parishes in which they serve, sharing their experiences and encouraging each other.

From bereavement ministry, helping asylum seekers, reaching out to the housebound, supporting carers, working as part of the SVP, and providing a food bank for those in need, the common thread was looking for those in need or on the margins of our faith communities and bringing them the love and light of the Gospel. All dedicated to the same purpose - building up the Body of Christ.

The community was also updated on the four men presently in formation for Diaconal ministry and the programme they are following.

Our Lord was servant of all. In the ministry of charity, Deacons conform themselves in the likeness of Christ the Servant, whom they represent. Let us ask our loving and generous Father to bless our Diocese of Hallam, by raising up faith filled and dedicated Priests, Deacons and Religious. We pray for all those who are called to serve. Rev Tony Strike.

## Will you join Father John Cooke in signing Salina's letter in your parish?



Following Fr John and Oscar's Big Lent walk for CAFOD, he's leading a parish action to remain in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world, to help them adapt for sustainable livelihoods and care for our precious God-given environment.

For generations, small-scale farmers have freely swapped and shared a wide variety of seeds. But new laws supported by the World Bank are being introduced that limit what small farmers can do with their seeds. Salina, a small-scale farmer in Bangladesh, has written a letter to the World Bank calling for the rights of small-scale farmers to be protected.



## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Following very generous fundraising during Lent, parish collections, and sponsored walks, for communities overseas to access what they need in the climate crisis, we also want to tackle some of the causes of global food poverty.

Could you help your parish support Salina by co-signing her letter? We've made things as simple as possible for you and your parish to support Salina in her efforts. So far five Bishops have signed - could your parishioners add their names too? Order Salina's letter for your parish  
Angela Powell

## Continuing the story of our refugee family



### School for Mum and Dad

Imagine arriving alone in a remote village in China.. .. no interpreter. Chinese writing everywhere. How do you feel? Imagine!"

Learning English is THE major challenge for all newly arrived refugees. Easier for children than for adults, it is particularly difficult for those not yet literate in their own language, like the father of our family. Think of negotiating an application for benefits, dealing with house insurance, making medical appointments, talking to the school about a child...even the Driving Theory test - a task very close to his

heart! How much less help would our family have needed if they had been able to speak English?

Sheffield College offered courses, but no places were available. Fortunately, we found a suitable place in a community class at the SYAC centre in the Wicker, a short walk from home. The teacher of this class, experienced and enthusiastic, readily accepted help in the class, and it has been our privilege to encourage students from different countries become friends, support each other, and progress together.

Homework sessions from these classes have been huge fun for the whole family, as they compete with the father to recognise words and numbers.

The mother, in the late stages of pregnancy and then new motherhood, was not ready to join a class, so a group of us completed a short training course with SAVTE (Sheffield Association for Voluntary Teaching of English) - and she has a lesson at home every week. Last week she had the confidence to phone us - a real break-through. Recently she has herself found a class near home.

Learning a new language is never easy but first steps are the most difficult - and our family has made a start!

Kate McCullough 'Home from Home Hallam'

## Diocesan Celebration of Lay Pastoral Ministry



About fifty people gathered in St Charles' Church, Sheffield to give thanks to God and celebrate the variety of forms of Lay ministry that are happening across the diocese. It brought together those involved as altar servers,

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

readers, welcomers and musicians, together with those involved in preparing couples for marriage. The day came at the end of a Training Day for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and during the Mass sixteen of them were commissioned to serve for the next four years.

The training earlier in the day had been offered primarily to new Extraordinary Ministers but some who came along had asked to join the day as an opportunity to reflect on their own experience of ministry having been commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers many years ago. During the training, the group reflected on their own call to ministry as a response to their baptism. They also had an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the Eucharist. The training concluded with some practical considerations about ministry at Mass as well as taking Holy Communion to the sick and the housebound including the consideration of proper safeguarding procedures.

This is the first time in a number of years that a diocesan training has been offered for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Those present really valued coming together as a diocesan group and found that the event nourished their own spirituality of the Eucharist. The Formation and Mission team will review if this is the most effective way of providing ongoing formation for this and other forms of ministry or if it should offer annual or seasonal days of reflection and/or training for all involved in ministry. If you are involved in any form of ministry and would like to contribute to the decision-making process about the best way of providing formation please contact the Formation and Mission Team.

One thing that some of the long-serving ministers said was that although they were only commissioned for their role for a period of four years some had never been recommissioned at all. It is important that they are recommissioned if only to allow the opportunity for other members of our parish communities to respond to their baptismal calling and serve in this way. It also allows those who have exercised this

ministry for a number of years to move on to other forms of ministry. To promote this, Bishop Ralph would like to encourage all parishes to have an annual renewal of commitment of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion on or about the feast of Corpus Christi. It might also be appropriate to do this for other ministries at other points during the liturgical year such as Readers on the Sunday of the Word of God.

## Season of Creation 2023



# SEASON OF CREATION

Let Justice and Peace Flow

The Season of Creation starts runs each year from 1 September-4 October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. Is your parish doing anything to mark this time? It may be an opportunity to see how your parish is contributing to the diocesan commitment to Laudato si. It may be an opportunity to read Laudato si, the Pope's letter about caring for our common home, in you parish community; or to form a Laudato Si Circle, or join people from around the world online and train to be a Laudato Si Animator <https://laudatosianimators.org/> If you would like more information please contact us the Formation & Mission Team or the Environmental leads.



## Articles

### CAFOD's local Education Coordinator for Hallam Diocese



I'd like to introduce myself; my name is Sharon Matthews; I've recently started a new role as CAFOD's local Education Coordinator for Hallam Diocese. I am working alongside Angela Powell who is Parish focused.

Having enjoyed working in the diocese of Hallam as a primary school teacher for approximately 25 years, and RE coordinator for the last 5 years, I'm now delighted to be part of the CAFOD team. For those who aren't familiar, CAFOD is the official overseas aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales reaching out to people who live in poverty, so that every woman, man and child can live a full and dignified life.

CAFOD provides our schools with resources and sessions that are delivered by our School Volunteer Visitors. As an RE coordinator, I really valued CAFOD's visits; their mission and values were integral to our school. Our School Volunteer, Rita, was a regular visitor; the children knew her, what she represented, and they looked forward to her visits. And it is here

that I ask for your support, as we are in need of a few more visitors in the Hallam Diocese.

Could you be a CAFOD Schools Volunteer?

#### Wanted!

– volunteers to help children/students learn about the work of CAFOD. Could you help your local school deliver assemblies and/or workshops that encourage young people to put faith into action to help others? It would only require a few hours of your time each term and you would be assisting your local community to work together for the Common Good. No experience is necessary, and full support and training will be given.

For more information, please contact: Mrs Sharon Matthews smatthews@cafod.org.uk 07748 514641

## March for Life

A promotional poster for the March for Life UK in London. The top section features the text 'March for Life UK | London Saturday 2nd September | 2023' and a banner that reads 'LIFE FROM CONCEPTION NO EXCEPTION'. Below this is a photograph of a man holding a sign that says 'ABORTION DESTROYS THE FREEDOM TO LIVE MARCH FOR LIFE UK'. To the right of the sign is a block of text: 'Many are concerned about restrictions on freedoms but it's often not until these restrictions affect us personally that we speak up. Sadly, those who have their most fundamental freedom taken from them, by abortion, cannot speak for themselves - this is why we march. For our nation to be truly free, no one can be denied the number one freedom, the freedom to live!' Below the text is the hashtag '#freedomtolive'. At the bottom, there are two boxes: 'Morning Events: The Emmanuel Centre Marsham St, SW1P 3DW 10.30am - 1.00pm Mass: 10.30am Westminster Cathedral' and 'The March: 1.30pm From The Emmanuel Centre Ends at Parliament Square 4.30pm'.

## Articles

### UCM SUPPORT YOUTH MINISTRY



On Sunday 14th May 2023 the members of the Union of Catholic Mothers met at the Church of St. Peter in Chains, Doncaster. The afternoon included Tombola, a bric-a-brac stall, and teas and coffees were served raising a total of £250. This money was donated to Susan McDonald the Director of Youth Ministry in the Hallam Diocese to assist with the costs for the Youth Ministry. Susan is pictured with Mrs. Margaret Webster the UCM Foundation Treasurer.

### Signs of Hope in a Troubled World



Our CAFOD Director recently talked about the 'Signs of Hope in a Troubled World', it was the theme of a lecture she gave for a Memorial Lecture in the diocese of Middlesbrough. Read the opening paragraphs or watch the lecture in full on a CAFOD Facebook page.

Christine began by explaining her reasons for choosing this theme, "I chose the title "Signs of hope in a troubled world" because it is easy to

feel overwhelmed in the face of so much that is wrong in our society, we rarely see "good news" stories on our news, and yet, there is so much witness and hope out there.

I want to reflect on what it means to be a sign of hope at different levels and how they are connected. I will give some illustrations based on the work of CAFOD but do remember that the church as a whole is a huge witness to hope. I particularly want to reflect on the challenges that Pope Francis has laid out to us in his most recent letter, Fratelli Tutti – brothers and sisters all. Providing you with some insights from that document into what being a sign of hope might mean.

#### The reality of our world

Our world is troubled. What worries you?

At the local level we might think of crime and violence, especially towards our young people – gangs and drug cultures. We might worry about poverty and the increasing numbers of people who struggle to get by – to put their heating on, to put food on the table. My two local churches (one catholic one Anglican) organise food distribution. More than 300 packs of food are given out between them every week.

At work, as part of the Caritas Network, I get regular updates on emergency responses and situations every day. The conflict in Sudan is very worrying, causing significant movement of people out of the conflict areas and out of the country into neighbouring countries who are already facing severe food crises.

Across East Africa over 30 million people face a food crisis - in some places it is famine conditions, but the governments are unwilling to use that term. A pledging conference recently has seen more contributions made, but the international community has really only funded about half of what is needed for the region.

The war in Ukraine continues, and colleagues in Caritas SPES continue to provide the essentials as well as psycho social support and accommodation to people in some of the most war-torn areas.

The floods in Pakistan, the earthquake in Syria/Turkey; I could go on. You don't need me



## Articles

to tell you that we have a troubled world.

The underlying causes of why our world is troubled are structural: climate change, conflict, economic inequality. The way our world is structured and organised is based on a set of values that frankly are at odds with the Christian values of human dignity, of integral human development: that holistic and profoundly spiritual sense of development that Paul VI outlined in 1965 *Populorum Progressio*. He didn't just talk about people having the basics, he talked about how people should be "artisans of their own destiny". This, along with another idea, an "ethic of solidarity" that Francis has developed further and both of which are so essential in the Christian conception of the human person.

the full article is available on our website

## In Solidarity



***Home from Home Hallam looks back on a year of support for a refugee family***

### **Our mission is**

to act "in solidarity" with our Syrian family. But what does Solidarity mean?

Solidarity means listening... to the family, to experts; discovering the reality of being a refugee.

Solidarity means house-hunting, and home-making; putting up curtains, taking down shelves, waiting...for beds to arrive, meters to be read. Finding the right person in Local Authority, Health and Education services, and establishing rapport. Negotiating that impenetrable maze, the 'Benefits System'. Working miracles daily.

Solidarity is setting up a mobile phone contract, involving speaking English AND having Home Office ID - for which we prayed...endlessly!

Solidarity means risking ineptitude, especially on Google Translate - watching as my carefully-worded English sentence becomes incomprehensible gibberish in Arabic - or listening to a child's description, in halting English, of a trip to the disco - or Tesco? What did he make of my replies?

Solidarity is chasing unwarranted delays, checking for omissions, oversights, pressing British Gas to return money missing from the family account.

Solidarity is shared exasperation at simple medical resources taking 6 months to materialise, at appointments are changed, again. It's reassuring each other, when our comfort zone is miles away - not that we always agree. Thank God!!

Solidarity is helping children settle and learn, helping parents cope with meetings, job centre visits, language providers. We literally walk alongside them - or take the tram!

Solidarity is happiness shared: it's enjoying Dad's pride at the rows of vegetables in his new garden, his joy at his son's English; and mum's smile, as her disabled daughter moves to our guitar music, while the younger girl laughs, boasting sparkly, dentist-cleaned teeth.

Solidarity tastes like sweet tea, graciously offered, with homemade Syrian cakes.

To quote Charlie Mackesy: " We have such a long way to go.....but look how far we have come".  
Kate McCullough 'Home from Home Hallam'

## Articles

### St Joseph's Dinnington Live Simply Group



#### Live Simply June Report to the Reflection Group

#### No Mow May Review

##### Successes

the crowning glory was that we had four bee orchids flowering in the grass for the first time ever and Fr Andy saw a hedgehog in his garden for the first time!!!

The spring bulbs, dandelions and the cowslips put on a great show, as did pansies, buttercups, daisies, plantain, clover, speedwell, hawkweed, and many other wildflowers. The numbers of birds and insects seen in the garden also increased.

##### Review

The grass in the church garden was left uncut for different lengths of time, the parts that had been cut once or twice before the start of May and then were left uncut for the whole of May produced the most flowers. The areas of grass that were left totally uncut from the beginning of the year until the end of May produced the least flowers. They looked very scruffy by the end of the experiment and were very difficult to cut with our domestic mower, thankfully both the mower and the person who cut the grass survived. The nettles were also left to grow, however as they grew bigger they encroached on the entrance to the gazebo and were a hazard particularly to children and so they were cut to the ground.

#### Conclusion and Recommendation

If we were to do it again next year we wouldn't leave any areas uncut from the beginning of the year. It would be good to join in No Mow May as it clearly benefited insects, birds, wildflowers and hedgehogs.

#### Live Simply June

Great Big Green Week is 10th– 18th June. It is the UK's biggest ever celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature and St. Joseph's are taking part!!

On Sun 11th June there will be an Exhibition of Environment Friendly and Plastic Free Products in church, this will be an opportunity for parishioners to check out some tried and tested eco - products.

#### Exhibition of Environment Friendly and Plastic Free Products

June 2023

We had a display of a whole range of tried and tested environment friendly and plastic free products along with a review of all the products on display and information where they are available.

This event was registered as part of Big Green Week

The Exhibition took place outside church on June 11th. It was a great success many parishioners stopped to look at the exhibition and were amazed at the range of products that are available. It provoked a lot of conversations and discussions. People were heard to say " I use that" or " I don't use that I use ..... " and " You can get that at ..... it's really good ).The products were on display in church for the rest of June.

Christine Parrott



## Articles

### How to Live Simply in July



The Diocesan Environmental Leads share some ideas on how we can live simply during July

#### **Reduce Microplastic Pollution in the Ocean:**

##### **Change how you do the Laundry**

#### **Live Simply and Live Sustainably with Creation**

#### **Reduce Microplastic Pollution in the Ocean: Change how you do the laundry**

When we think of plastic pollution in the ocean we think of turtles and sea birds choking on plastic bags or the Great Pacific Garbage Patch – a floating mountain of plastic bottles, food containers, carrier bags and yoghurt pots. What many of us don't know is that the majority of the plastic pollution in the ocean is microplastics. These are tiny fragments of plastic, less than 5mm, they are too small for the human eye to see but they cause serious issues once they get into the ocean.

#### **Why are microplastics so bad?**

Microplastics aren't effectively filtered out by waste treatment plants so they end up in rivers and oceans. To make matters worse untreated water from waste treatment plants is often released into rivers and oceans. Fish and other sea creatures swallow microplastics, sometimes because they mistake the fragments for food. Microplastics also get stuck in the gills of fish, making it harder for them to breathe. Toxins stick to microplastic particles which concentrates them making them even more poisonous.

#### **What's laundry got to do with microplastics?**

Around 35% of microplastic pollution in the ocean comes from washing clothes. Each and every wash load releases microplastic fibres from our clothes into the water system. Almost 13,000 tons of microplastics are released into European waters every year

#### **What can you do?**

##### **How you do your washing can help**

Wash your clothes less often Wash a full load to reduce friction between clothes Wash your clothes at a cooler temperature Wash with a liquid detergent. Using a detergent powder can cause more abrasion in fabrics leading to more shedding Air dry instead of tumble dry

##### **Buy higher quality clothes less often**

Clothing releases most microplastics in the first few washes. The more fast fashion you buy, the more new clothing you're washing. Buying higher quality clothing, ideally second hand that you can keep for longer will help reduce your impact.

##### **Use a microfibre capture wash bag**

In a study by Plymouth University the Guppy Friend wash bag was shown to reduce microplastic release from synthetic fabrics by 54%. It works by trapping microplastics and reducing friction between clothes Using a wash bag is especially important for new clothes, fleeces, and microfibre dish/cleaning cloths as fabrics shed most microplastics in the first 8 washes. Other microfibre capture wash bags are available.

##### **Fit a Microplastic filter to your washing machine.**

Gulp microplastic washing machine filter is new on the market; it claims to capture 94% of microplastics. Available from -

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/aroot/gulp-self-cleaning-washing-machine-microplastic-filter>

the full article is available on our website

## Articles

### New Report on 'Catholics and God's Animals'

Polish

**Congress of Catholic Women and Men's 'Caring for Creation' Group.**

**In my opinion, the Catholic Church is deserving of strong criticism in one major area: Her disregard for animals as beings in their own right, that we should treat with love and respect.**

#### Laudato Si'

Pope Francis's Encyclical dealing with mankind's treatment of planet earth doesn't introduce a new concept regarding animals; he reiterates what the Church has always taught but failed to practice, which is that we should treat animals kindly. Unfortunately, the Church has never conceded rights to animals. Kindness is good, but it is justice that animals want, a recognition that their lives and their sufferings matter.

#### Animals ignored

##### In sermons

I was baptised a Catholic as a baby and during the decades that I have been attending Mass, priests' sermons have urged me to live a life of kindness and consideration, *but only towards my own species.*

##### In the Catechism

What the Catechism gives with one hand, it takes back with the other. It tells us that we must be 'kind' to animals, but then tells us that we may use animals for our needs – food, clothing, entertainment, research etc... very ambiguous – we need food, but we don't need meat. We need clothes, but we don't need wool or leather.

##### In pastoral letters

Statements and letters from the bishops with advice on how to vote in the 2015 and 2017 General Elections and the 2016 EU Referendum contained not one word about animals.

Things have not changed. Although the environment is mentioned these days, animals are not.

##### On the website

of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, there are departments, projects, committees, offices, groups, initiatives aplenty, but I can't find anything to do with animals. Even under 'Concerning the Environment' the whole thrust is on the effect on humans of our abuse of the planet, with barely a nod towards animals.

#### 'Catholics and God's Animals, how we fulfil the task of being human'

This Report by Barbara Niedźwiedzka, published May 2023, examines the whole question of the Church and animals.

Barbara is from the Polish

*Congress of Catholic Women and Men*

's 'Caring for Creation' Group, and her Report presents us with the reality of the Catholic attitude to animals. The author is Polish and the Report relates to Poland concerning the statistics, but can be extrapolated to the global Catholic Church concerning attitudes.

It is very relevant in these days of factory farming and environmental crises, but it also shows the theological and humanitarian reasons for respecting animals.

The Report looks into all aspects of the issue, starting with how animals should be part of our moral vista, and how we treat animals today, then looking at why Catholics accept ill treatment of animals.

Barbara looks back at how the Scriptures spoke of animals, how early Christians viewed them and how the Church has presented them in her teachings. She explains the impact of our mistreatment of animals on our health and on the environment, and describes the various ways that Catholics are intimately involved in animal abuse, while other Catholics choose to ignore the whole issue.

If you need a reason not to kill or abuse animals, and obviously most of us do, then I urge you to read this Report.

Virginia Bell, Virginia Bell, a Laudato Si' Animator, UK

the full article is available on our website