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# Hallam Bridge



ISSUE  
10

October 2023

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



Diocese of Hallam  
FORMATION AND MISSION

## Advent: Waiting With Attitude

An opportunity to spend some time in prayerful reflection at the beginning of Advent.  
with Fr Peter Scally sj

**2 December 11:00-4:00**

Diocese of Hallam Pastoral Centre  
Saint Charles Street, Sheffield

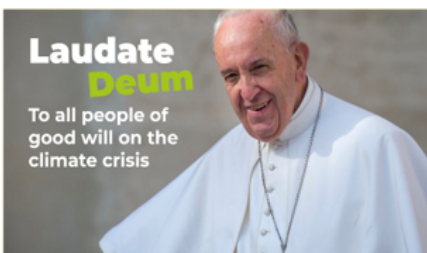
Bookings are necessary and will open on 1 November the Formation and Mission Eventbrite page



### Laudate Deum

At the end of the Season of Creation on 4 October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis issued a new Apostolic Exhortation called Laudate Deum (Praise God) on the climate crisis. It us addressed to all people of goodwill. Find out more

Page 3



### Welcoming the Year of Prayer

Join us online:  
15th November 2023 at 7:30pm




### Fr Bernard O'Brien RIP

Read about Fr Bernard's life and ministry on page 3

As the first session of the Synod closes the participants send a letter to us all

### Letter of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God

Dear sisters, dear brothers,  
As the proceedings of the first session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops draw to a close, we want to thank God with all of you for the beautiful and enriching experience we have lived. We lived this blessed time in profound communion with all of you. We were supported by your prayers, bearing with you your expectations, your questions, as well as your fears. As Pope Francis requested two years ago, a long process of listening and discernment was initiated, open to all the People of God, no one being excluded, to "journey together" under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, missionary disciples engaged in the following of Jesus Christ.

continued on page 2

### Deacons Renew their Commitment to Serve

The Permanent Deacons of Hallam Diocese gathered together with Bishop Ralph at Sacred Heart Church, Hillsborough, on 4th October, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, to renew their ordination vows.

Page 4

## Upcoming Events

4-29 October Sixteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality

3 November 5:00 Synod Catch Up Co-responsibility in Mission on Zoom

2 December Advent Retreat at Hallam Pastoral Centre

## Upcoming Pilgrimages

Lourdes Pilgrimage 28 June-4 July 2024

Padley Pilgrimage 7 July 2024

Note: For details about events and pilgrimages, please visit our website.

Some personal connections arose in relation to this month's Hallam Bridge. An invitation to join an Advent Reflection Day with Fr Peter Scally sj is on page 1; a parishioner hearing about this said with great delight that they knew Fr Peter from when he was a student here in Sheffield and would be delighted to encounter him again. All are welcome to the Day of Reflection, but book soon on the Formation and Mission Eventbrite page, as places are limited. Another personal conversation was with a parishioner who spoke with great warmth of the ministry of Fr Bernard, their parish priest for many years. May he rest in peace and rise in glory; a brief account of his life is included this month. Another parishioner expressed interest in the role of deacon; and it is good to celebrate the loyal servant service of the diocesan deacons. We also acknowledge the long service of Ann Corcoran to the Union of Catholic Mothers on the celebration of her eightieth birthday.

Formation and Mission were surprised to receive a query about the whereabouts of the Diocesan Synod Report and questions about whether there is anything further going to happen. So look out for a brief summary of the synod story so far - what it is, when it began, what happened, what is happening now and how you could learn more or become more involved. All the Synod documents are on the Synod pages of Hallam diocesan website. Keep an eye on the website for more news. See page 7 for an invitation to an online learning session about the synod and notice the Synod Catch-up zoom hour on 3 November where you can ask questions and hear from others about the diocesan story. Email Formation and Mission or book on Eventbrite.

Looking ahead, Pope Francis has announced a Jubilee Year 2025 whose theme is "Pilgrims of Hope" It will run from the opening of the Holy Door on 24th December 2024 until the Feast of Epiphany 2026. The Holy Father has invited the whole Church to prepare for the Jubilee Year by a rereading of the fundamental texts of the Second Vatican Council and welcoming them "as a moment of growth in the faith."



The four constitutions of Vatican II are:

- Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy – Sacrosanctum Concilium;
- Dogmatic constitution on the Church – Lumen Gentium;
- Dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation – Dei Verbum;
- Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world – Gaudium et Spes.

Watch out for further news from the diocese and the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. There is a prayerful beginning for this on 15 November online with the Jesuit see page 8.

Editor, Formation and Mission

## Letter to the People of God -Continued from page one

The session in which we have been gathered in Rome since 30 September is an important phase of this process. In many ways it has been an unprecedented experience. For the first time, at Pope Francis' invitation, men and women have been invited, in virtue of their baptism, to sit at the same table to take part, not only in the discussions, but also in the voting process of this Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. Together, in the complementarity of our vocations, our charisms and our ministries, we have listened intently to the Word of God and the experience of others. Using the conversation in the Spirit method, we have humbly shared the wealth and poverty of our communities from every continent, seeking to discern what the Holy Spirit wants to say to the Church today. We have thus also experienced the importance of fostering mutual exchanges between the Latin tradition and the traditions of Eastern Christianity. The participation of fraternal delegates from other Churches and Ecclesial Communities deeply enriched our discussions.

Our assembly took place in the context of a world in crisis, whose wounds and scandalous inequalities resonated painfully in our hearts, infusing our work with a particular gravity, especially since some of us come from countries where war rages. We prayed for the victims of deadly violence, without forgetting all those who have been forced by misery and corruption to take the dangerous road of migration. We assured our solidarity and commitment alongside the women and men all over the world who are working to build justice and peace.

This is a publication by Hallam Diocese. Please send your articles or feedback to [communications@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:communications@hallam-diocese.com) or to Hallam Pastoral Centre  
St Charles St, Sheffield  
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**CONTACT**

At the invitation of the Holy Father, we made significant room for silence to foster mutual listening and a desire for communion in the Spirit among us. During the opening ecumenical vigil, we experienced how the thirst for unity increases in the silent contemplation of the crucified Christ. In fact, the cross is the only cathedra of the One who, having given himself for the salvation of the world, entrusted His disciples to His Father, so that "they may all be one" (John 17:21). Firmly united in the hope brought by His Resurrection, we entrusted to Him our common home where the cries of the earth and the poor are becoming increasingly urgent: "Laudate Deum!" ("Praise God!"), as Pope Francis reminded us at the beginning of our work.

Day by day, we felt the pressing call to pastoral and missionary conversion. For the Church's vocation is to proclaim the Gospel not by focusing on itself, but by placing itself at the service of the infinite love with which God loved the world (cf. John 3:16). When homeless people near St. Peter's Square were asked about their expectations regarding the Church on the occasion of this synod, they replied: "Love!". This love must always remain the ardent heart of the Church, a Trinitarian and Eucharistic love, as the Pope recalled on October 15, midway through our assembly, invoking the message of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. It is "trust" that gives us the audacity and inner freedom that we experienced, not hesitating to freely and humbly express our convergences, differences, desires and questions.

And now? We hope that the months leading to the second session in October 2024 will allow everyone to concretely participate in the dynamism of missionary communion indicated by the word "synod". This is not about ideology, but about an experience rooted in the apostolic tradition. As the Pope reminded us at the beginning of this process, "communion and mission can risk remaining somewhat abstract, unless we cultivate an ecclesial praxis that expresses the concreteness of synodality (...) encouraging real involvement on the part of each and all" (October 9, 2021). There are multiple challenges and numerous questions: the synthesis report of the first session will specify the points of agreement we have reached, highlight the open questions, and indicate how our work will proceed.

To progress in its discernment, the Church absolutely needs to listen to everyone, starting with the poorest. This requires a path of conversion on its part, which is also a path of praise: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children" (Luke 10:21)! It means listening to those who have been denied the right to speak in society or who feel excluded, even by the Church; listening to people who are victims of racism in all its forms – in particular in some regions to indigenous peoples whose cultures have been scorned. Above all, the Church of our time has the duty to listen, in a spirit of conversion, to those who have been victims of abuse committed by members of the ecclesial body, and to commit herself concretely and structurally to ensuring that this does not happen again.

The Church also needs to listen to the laity, women and men, all called to holiness by virtue of their baptismal vocation: to the testimony of catechists, who in many situations are the first proclaimers of the Gospel; to the simplicity and vivacity of children, the enthusiasm of youth, to their questions, and their pleas; to the dreams, the wisdom and the memory of elderly people. The Church needs to listen to families, to their educational concerns, to the Christian witness they offer in today's world. She needs to welcome the voice of those who want to be involved in lay ministries and to participate in discernment and decision-making structures.

To progress further in synodal discernment, the Church particularly needs to gather even more the words and experience of the ordained ministers: priests, the primary collaborators of the bishops, whose sacramental ministry is indispensable for the life of the whole body; deacons, who, through their ministry, signify the care of the entire Church for the most vulnerable. She also needs to let herself be questioned by the prophetic voice of consecrated life, the watchful sentinel of the Spirit's call. She also needs to be attentive to all those who do not share her faith but are seeking the truth, and in whom the Spirit, who "offers everyone the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery" (Gaudium et Spes 22, 5), is also present and operative.

"The world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission. It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium" (Pope Francis, October 17, 2015). We do not need to be afraid to respond to this call. Mary, Mother of the Church, the first on the journey, accompanies our pilgrimage. In joy and in sorrow, she shows us her Son and invites us to trust. And He, Jesus, is our only hope!

Vatican City, October 25, 2023

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**Subscribe**

## Around the Diocese

### Fr. Bernard O'Brien Pastor Emeritus of St. Paul's, Cantley, Doncaster RIP



Fr Bernard, who had become increasingly frail over the past few years died on 22 September 2023.

He was born in Chelmsford, Essex, on 28 January 1939, shortly before the war. He was the third in a family of six children. His father, William, came from Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, and his mother, Elizabeth, from Linz-am-Rhein, Germany. Both were Catholics, and active in their church, Our Lady of Lourdes, Leigh-on-Sea, and his family life revolved around it.

Aged 14, he attended Junior Seminary, St. Hugh's College, Tollerton, Nottingham. And from there to Senior Seminary, the English College, Lisbon. He was ordained as a priest for the Brentwood diocese on 6 June 1963 together with Fr. Pat Murphy who later would precede him as parish priest at St Paul's.

His first curacy was to Saints Peter and Paul, Ilford, in Brentwood Diocese. After 6 years he went to Colchester, but after a year, back to the East End, to Our Lady of Lourdes, Wanstead. From there he was appointed to his first parish, St. Thomas', Grays, on the Thames. Three years later, it was back to Colchester, this time as Parish Priest; he worked there for 13 years. The next change, in 1988, was to Leigh, his 'home'

parish! After five years, he joined the Prison Service.

At that time a new prison was being built in Doncaster, a private prison on the American model. He took up a part-time post there, but within a year moved into the state sector, with a full-time post in HMP. Lindholme and HMP Moorland. He stayed for 10 years, before handing his keys in, aged 65.

Bishop John appointed him in 2004 to St. Pauls, to take charge following the retirement of Fr. Pat Murphy. He also served as the diocesan representative to the Prison Service in the Diocese.

Over the years, as well as parish work, he has served as a Dean, the Diocesan Representative on Essex Education Committee, Diocesan Chair of Justice and Peace, and the Coordinating Chaplain of the Yorkshire Group of Prisons.

Father Bernard retired on 28 January 2019 - his 80 Birthday. He spent his retirement living in his final parish and continued to be involved in the life of the parish community where he had ministered.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

## Renewal of Diaconal Commitment



The Permanent Deacons of Hallam Diocese gathered together with Bishop Ralph at Sacred Heart Church, Hillsborough, on 4th October, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, to renew their ordination vows.

The Diocesan Deacon's chose this date to renew their vows before the Bishop as St. Francis was a deacon himself, and his life, especially his

## Around the Diocese

humble, Christ-like service and love for the poor, meant he set a good example. He exhibited the heart of a deacon.

Father Michael Umameh, the newly appointed Director of Deacons, preached the homily, reminding our Deacons of the three-fold nature of their ministry of service; to Word, Altar and Charity. 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. Deacon Tony Strike

## Congratulations



Congratulations to Mrs Ann Corcoran on her 80th birthday which was celebrated on 28th June 2023. Ann is a loyal member of the Union of Catholic Mothers in the St. Peter-in-Chains Foundation Doncaster in the Hallam Diocese. God's blessings to you Ann. Dorothy Anderson

## Presentations of the Guild Of St.Stephen Silver Medal of Merit



The Archconfraternity of St. Stephen recognised the loyal service at the Holy Altar of two long-standing parish MC's in the Diocese.

Peter Heath and Peter Tickle were presented with Silver Medals of Merit in recognition of 40 years service at the Lord's Altar respectively. Rev Deacon Tony Strike, the Diocesan Director of the Guild of St Stephen, attended Masses for the blessing and presentation of the medals.

Peter Heath received his medal at St Mary Magdalene, Cudworth, on Saturday 7 October 2023 at the 6:00 pm Mass. Peter Tickle received his medal at St Teresa's Darton at the 9:30am Mass on Sunday 8 October 2023.

The Guild of St Stephen is an International Organisation of Altar Servers founded in England in 1904. The objectives of the Guild are: To encourage the highest standards of serving at the Church's liturgy and so contribute to the whole community's participation in the worship of God. To provide altar servers with a greater understanding of what they are doing so that they may serve with increasing reverence and prayerfulness. To unite servers of different parishes and dioceses for their mutual support and encouragement.

Over 30 parishes in the Diocese are affiliated to the Guild, some for over 70 years and others more recently affiliated, and have been enrolling new Servers, presenting them with the Guild Medal.

Contact Deacon Tony Strike to find out more (astrike@hallam-diocese.com)

## Around the Diocese

### Travelling Statue of The Blessed Virgin Mary in Sheffield



In the closing months of the Church's synodal journey St Marie's Sheffield hosted the Travelling Statue that is touring the country wherever the Rosary is prayed outdoors. St Marie's was the perfect location for this visit as the Cathedral Dean had erected on the Sanctuary an Icon of Our Lady as a focus for prayer for our synodal journey 2022-2024.

Alongside the Cathedral the Travelling Statue was welcomed by Fr Lee at St Vincent's Mission Hub for the Sunday Mass of 24 September which providentially is the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham. This Feast Day was particularly appropriate as Our Lady of Walsingham is the patron of this lay apostolate of the Public Rosary Witness of which there are over 40 locations throughout the UK. More details can be found on their website <https://www.ukprays.org/>

The purpose of the touring statue is to seek the protection and Intercession of Our Lady for England and to pray for the Church's mission in the new evangelisation which is epitomised by the ethos of the Synod. There was much anticipation for the Travelling Statue's visit to Sheffield. It was a return visit as it was hosted last year at St Thomas More & at St Mary's High Green as well as St Marie's.

This time the emphasis was on home visits which proved occasions of deep prayer and joy. The keynote however is praying the Rosary in the public arena. Three Outdoor Rosarys were held at Sheffield City Hall Plaza.

It was an encouragement to continue with the Outdoor Rosary following the wonderful

example of St Marie's Parish hosting the Public Rosary Witness on 25 March 2022 at which there were over 150 participants from all over the Sheffield Deanery. The Outdoor Rosary takes place monthly usually on the second Wednesday outside the City Hall following the 12:30 Mass at St Marie's.

It was a blessing to host the Travelling Statue for several weeks in September before its onward journey to Nottingham. The visit focused on praying not only on personal intentions but also for the needs of the Church and for the success of the Synod. Joseph Durham

### Thanksgiving in Doncaster for Support of Missio's work

It was fantastic to share a special Mission Mass with supporters and volunteers from Diocese of Hallam, at St. Peter-in-Chains, Doncaster last weekend.

We were especially joyful to present Angela, Local Secretary at St Thomas of Canterbury Church, with a gold medal and certificate, thanking her for a whopping 43 years of service to Missio and the Red Box!

Parish Priest Fr Darren Reid made us all very welcome, and we had a great time chatting and sharing refreshments in Parish Hall after Mass. Fr Emmanuel Mbeh MHM gave an engaging talk on the Mill Hill Missionaries and Missio's work. Theresa Codd-Missio

### Looking Ahead

## Advent Day of Recollection

**Diocese of Hallam**  
FORMATION AND MISSION

### Advent: Waiting With Attitude

An opportunity to spend some time in prayerful reflection at the beginning of Advent, with Fr Peter Scally SJ

**2 December 11:00-4:00**

Diocese of Hallam Pastoral Centre  
Saint Charles Street, Sheffield

Bookings are necessary and will open on 1 November the Formation and Mission Eventbrite page

Advent Day of Reflection and Prayer with Fr Peter Scally sj

2 December 11:00 4:00 Bookings are necessary using QR Code or here <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/hallam-formation-and-mission-46212155433>

## Hallam's Best Kept Secret

### HALLAM'S BEST KEPT SECRET?

**caritas**  
diocese of hallam  
promoting social action

**Hi, We are CARITAS**

**Did you know.....**

- We currently have 32 counsellors in 27 schools across the diocese. Last year we exceeded hours of counselling! **10K**
- We have been awarded 2 major sources of funding which will now enable us to provide support to those who have experienced Domestic Abuse via our "Light Project".
- The recently secured National Lottery Funding will allow us to provide various services across the area for the next 2 years.
- One of our projects is providing courses around Well-Being where we deliver a free 6 week programme of sessions online and in person across the Diocese. They are run in a friendly, relaxed and supportive environment.
- We explore a number of themes including
  - Emotional self care
  - Putting our own needs first
  - Managing Stress and Learning Relaxations techniques.
  - How to be more assertive
  - Building resilience to move forward on life.

**CARMEL CARE**  
Recently the Plater Trust has supported us, in helping us to improve the fabric of the building. We have managed to refurbish several rooms to include a new counselling suite.

**THANK YOU**  
We also received a gift from CATENIAN ASSOCIATION who were generous enough to donate £1764 which will enable us to carry on providing hot meals throughout the year including on Christmas Day. This is in addition to their ongoing support with the cost of therapeutic activities at the centre.

**CONTACT US**

If you would like information on any of our projects, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Bernie Ware Director bware@hallam-diocese.com  
Janet Kent Senior Manager jkent@hallam-diocese.com  
Amanda Chapman Admin achapman@hallam-diocese.com

## Imagine

First Wednesday of Each Month, 8pm

A guided prayer meditation with the imagination based on themes from the Gospels, the saints and seasons, the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola and even the natural world. Includes optional sharing in small groups.

<https://www.jesuit.org.uk/events/imagine-november-3> (no need to book) <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/events/imagine-december-3>

## Lepra Centenary Mass - an Invitation



You are invited to give thanks for the work of Lepra over the last 100 years in a celebration of Mass at Westminster Cathedral on Friday 26th January 2024 at 2.30pm, by Bishop Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton Diocese and Chair of the Bishops Conference Department for International Affairs.

## Looking Ahead

### Adventure in Prayer



Monday 27th November – Friday 1st December 2023

#### Afternoons:

14.00–15.15

OR

#### Evenings:

19.30–20.45

Find a way of praying that works for you and experience the riches of prayer with our online course. Adventure in Prayer will involve being guided in different types of prayer, individual time for prayer and sharing in small groups. <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/events/advent-adventure-in-prayer>

### Living with the Spirit of the Synod



7th, 11th and 14th November 2023 (runs again in January and July)

Over this short online course of two evenings and a full day, we will explore synodal expressions of mission, participation and community through shared experience, prayer, reflection and discussion. We hope that this will help us grow more as pilgrims of love, changed through encounter, listening and discernment.

<https://www.jesuit.org.uk/events/living-with-the-spirit-of-the-synod-2>

## Looking Ahead

### Welcoming the Year of Prayer



Wednesday 15th November 2023 19.30–20.45

We will prayerfully welcome in the Year of Prayer in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2025 with a guided time of prayer around the theme of jubilee and the opportunity to share in small groups. <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/events/welcoming-the-year-of-prayer>

### Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes: 28th June- 4th July 2024



Pilgrims Gather in 2023

The 2024 Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, led by Bishop Ralph, will take place from

**Friday 28th June to Thursday 4th July.**

Direct flight from Leeds Bradford Airport to

Lourdes and return, 6 nights' Full Board The fare is £879 (sharing a room). A limited number of single rooms are available at a supplement. Travel is by charter flight with arrangements made to help people with reduced mobility/medical needs.

Booking Forms can be downloaded from the pilgrimage website

**[www.hallam-lourdes.com](http://www.hallam-lourdes.com)**

where there are also links to videos some of the services from the 2023 pilgrimage. The QR code in this article will also take you to the pilgrimage website. There is also short video from the tour of St Bernadette's Relics of Great Britain in 2022 which is a good introduction to the idea of going on pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Applications are welcome from Assisted Pilgrims, i.e. those who need some form of support from the medical team or volunteer Helpers, e.g. due to mobility or health issues. Applications are also very welcome from doctors, nurses and volunteer Helpers to join our dedicated team (subject to an enhanced DBS check and references). Volunteering to help others on pilgrimage is a great experience. For further details email [lourdesoffice@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:lourdesoffice@hallam-diocese.com) or telephone **01302 247910 / 07724 650066**.

Young people from around the diocese in years 10-13 will travel as part of the pilgrimage. Details are available from school staff in each diocesan High School. Young people aged 16-18 not attending a diocesan High School, please contact Sue McDonald - [smcdonald@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:smcdonald@hallam-diocese.com).

**Alex Prior**

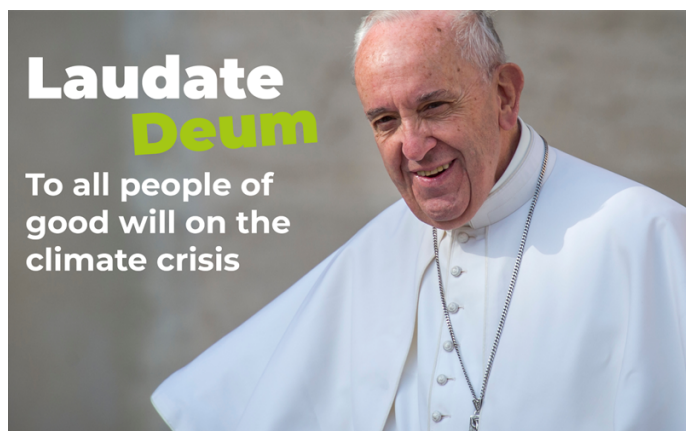
**Pilgrimage Director**

**Scan here for the Hallam Lourdes Pilgrimage website & booking form**



## Beyond the Diocese

### Laudate Deum: Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis



*A publication on the climate crisis addressed to all people of goodwill*

The Holy See published this October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis' new Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* on the climate crisis.

The Holy Father addresses the situation of climate change in *Laudate Deum* ("Praise God") because "a human being who pretends to take the place of God becomes the worst danger to himself" (LD 73) after the Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* promulgated on the Solemnity of Pentecost 2015.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, addressed to all people of goodwill, is composed of six Chapters: In the first, **"The Global Climate Crisis,"** Pope Francis warns that climate change is undeniable, and its effects are becoming increasingly evident "despite some attempts to minimize or ridicule them" (LD 6). He further regrets that the main cause of this problem is human activity and adds that, while we cannot correct such damage, we can still take steps to

prevent even more serious damage in the future.

In the second Chapter, the Holy Father addresses the **"technocratic paradigm"** and stresses that nature is not a resource to be exploited without end and urges us to recognize that unbridled ambition is not ethically sustainable (LD 28).

In the third Chapter, Francis refers to **"the weakness of international politics"** and stresses the urgent need for global cooperation through new multilateral agreements between States because current and past approaches are insufficient (LD 43).

In the fourth Chapter, the Pope reflects on **"climate conferences: progress and failures"** and encourages to overcome the selfish positions of countries for the benefit of the global common good (LD 44, 52) and in the fifth Chapter to reflect on "what is expected from COP28 in Dubai?" if we do not want to doom humanity.

In the last chapter, **"Spiritual Motivations,"** the Holy Father calls upon people of all religious confessions to respond. He also reminds Catholics that in the light of faith there is a responsibility to care for God's creation and that this implies respect for the laws of nature and recognition of the beauty and richness of God's creation.

Finally, Pope Francis invites us to walk in communion, together, synodically, and to commit ourselves to "reconciliation with the world that shelters us" (LD 69).

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pwe\\_bd0TUjk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pwe_bd0TUjk)

## Beyond the Diocese

### PACT'S NEW RESEARCH REVEALS DEVASTATING IMPACT OF IMPRISONMENT FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN



Prisoners • Families • Communities  
A Fresh Start Together

With the prison population now at an all-time high, new research published today demonstrates how prisoners' families are facing their own hidden sentence of financial hardship and emotional strain.

Pact, Prison Advice and Care Trust, is the national Catholic charity supporting people in prison and their children and families. Our new report, *'Serving a Hidden Sentence'* documents how families, already on low incomes and affected by rising prices, are being hit by additional costs and are struggling to cover the basics for themselves and their children.

In addition, families describe suffering from a widespread social stigma associated with imprisonment and that their mental and physical health suffer as a result.

Prisoners' families are often hit by a 'double whammy' of costs - the loss of a partner's income, coupled with the extra costs associated with staying in touch with and supporting their loved-one through a sentence.

The Government's research shows that prisoners who stay in touch with family and significant others are 39% less likely to return to crime after prison - so nurturing family

relationships where appropriate is hugely important for the common good of our communities. However, 56% of families said money had affected their ability to stay in touch with a loved one in prison.

Key findings from family members:

50% of respondents express concerns about affording what they need to care for their children.

38% of respondents spend a quarter or more of their household income supporting a loved-one in prison.

More than half are finding it difficult or very difficult to pay for some of the basics, including being able to afford food (49%), heating (50%) and clothes / shoes (68%).

71% are spending two days a week or more of their time to support their loved one.

The harms of imprisonment are not just financial. Many respondents said their health had suffered. The social stigma associated with imprisonment can often result in people seeking to hide or avoid talking about what has happened to their loved-one:

83% of respondents said that their mental health was worse or a lot worse;

71% said that their physical health was worse or a lot worse.

70% have lost relationships with friends and family.

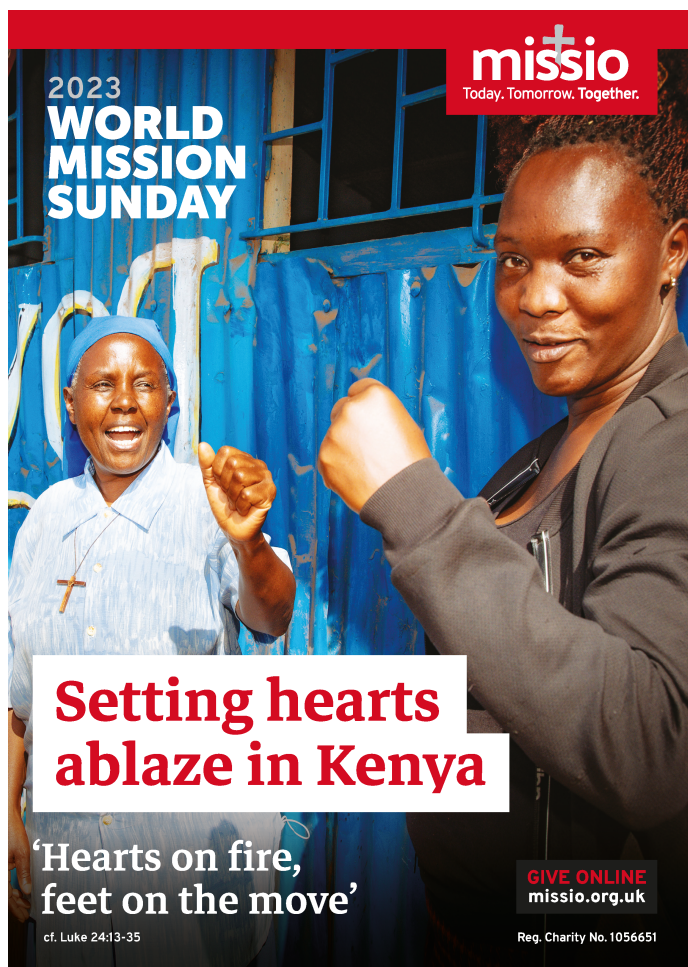
Only 29% say that they are always open about their loved-one's time in prison.

On Monday, the Justice Secretary announced a series of welcome measures, including greater use of community sentences and an early release scheme, which should result in a fall in the prison population.

the full article is available on our website

## Beyond the Diocese

World Mission Sunday 2023: Missio invites you to set hearts ablaze in Kenya



KENYA , Nairobi, St.Thomas Catholic Church

World Mission Sunday takes place on 22 October 2023. This global celebration of our Church and mission is coordinated by Missio, the Pope’s official charity for world mission, and every Catholic community throughout the world is encouraged to take part. For 2023, Pope Francis has chosen the theme ‘

***Hearts on fire, feet on the move***  
- cf. Luke 24:13-35.

**To highlight the work of missionaries around the world, Missio is sharing the story of Sister Mary in Kibera, as she walks alongside her community, and sets hearts ablaze with God’s love.**

Kibera is the biggest ‘slum’ in Kenya. In fact, it is the biggest in Africa. Rife with all the problems poverty brings – malnourishment, addiction, abuse – it is easy to see Kibera as a place of despair and misery.

Sr Mary and her fellow Little Sisters of Jesus choose to live in the heart of Kibera, alongside the people they serve. That way, they can better understand the daily challenges and reach all who are in need.

Sr Mary meets the challenges of life in Kibera with faith and friendship. She says: ‘If I am tired or down-hearted I find strength in the heart of Jesus... Our charism is “be one with the people”, “go where people are”. It’s from Saint Paul, but our foundress, Sister Magdalene, also took it from Saint Charles de Foucauld: to be there with them from the grassroots, discover what is happening, and together learn what to do.

‘My mission is befriending. I began with Christians I met in the church. Slowly I gained their confidence, and they welcomed me to their houses. They share their problems. When the stories are painful, even if I have nothing to offer, it’s possible to find someone who can help. That makes me create friendships with other people who are able to help. So, it’s friendship, but a friendship that means you can’t just sit and watch; that something has to be done.’

Among the many people Sr Mary works alongside is Linet, who courageously lives out her faith by rescuing and fostering children who are at risk from harm. Linet sometimes faces real danger to rescue the children who have been abandoned, orphaned, or trafficked. Linet shares: ‘We have so many challenges... It’s a challenge to find all of it. I need clothes. I need to pay for school. It’s difficult.’

Nonetheless, Linet doesn’t give up or lose heart – her faith and community keep her strong. She explains: ‘First of all let me say it’s a passion. I have it at heart. And again, when you wake up in the morning, and you stand by the roadside, you will see kids some have not eaten for days. They have nothing. Some are barefoot. So, I keep asking myself: what will I ever do in this world if I cannot help others?’

Thankfully, Linet has people like Sr Mary who support her mission.

the full article is available on our website

## Beyond the Diocese

Church staying with those who cannot flee in the Holy Land



With the deadline to evacuate northern Gaza approaching, religious Sisters announced that they were staying with those who are unable to leave. The Sisters of the Rosary – who have called for renewed prayers for peace – told Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) that they would be remaining in their convent, which is attached to central Gaza’s only Catholic Parish, the Holy Family, despite the Israeli Defence Forces’ call for everyone in northern Gaza to leave.

Speaking to ACN, Sister Nabila said: “We will not go. People have nothing, not the basic things. Where should we go? To die on the street? We have old people, the Mother Teresa’s Sisters are also here, with people with multiple disabilities and elderly people... “We need medicines. Many hospitals are destroyed. Where should we go?”

When ACN spoke to them, the parish was sheltering are around 150 Catholics and some 350 Greek Orthodox Christians, whose parish church is near to the Holy Family. Father Gabriel Romanelli, one of the two priests caring for Roman Catholics in Gaza told ACN: “What will they find in the south of the Gaza Strip? They will find hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people who have fled Gaza city. “And there is

nothing in the south and the health and humanitarian situation is disastrous with lack of water and food.” Father Romanelli, who is originally from Argentina, told ACN that many parishioners had no other option but to stay. He said the parishioners believe that “they are safer with Jesus. And that’s why together they pray, they pray, and hope that the Lord will protect them and that the people who are working and praying for peace will change the decision to strike the church which has always been an oasis of peace.” Father Romanelli, who was speaking from Bethlehem where he was when the violence first erupted, quoted from chapter three of the Lamentations of Jeremiah: “It is good to hope in silence for the salvation of the Lord”.

The Holy Family Catholic Parish prayed for peace during a candlelight on Saturday. Sister Nabila has been in contact with Pope Francis. During a phone call with the Pope on Sunday (15th October), she thanked him for his call for peace and his prayers for the suffering people yesterday. After Sunday’s Angelus Pope Francis again appealed for peace. He said: “I continue to follow with great sorrow what is happening in Israel and Palestine. I think again of the many – in particular of the children and the elderly. “I renew my appeal for the freeing of the hostages and I strongly ask that children, the sick, the elderly, women, and all civilians not be made victims of the conflict. “Humanitarian law is to be respected, especially in Gaza, where it is urgent and necessary to ensure humanitarian corridors and to come to the aid of the entire population. “Brothers and sisters, already many have died. Please, let no more innocent blood be shed, neither in the Holy Land nor in Ukraine, nor in any other place! Enough! Wars are always a defeat, always!” Pope Francis went on to back an initiative by Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem to observe 17th October) as a day of fasting and prayer.

ACN has added its voice to calls by the Pope and Christian leaders in the region for people to pray for peace in the Holy Land. By John Newton and Maria Lozano ACN