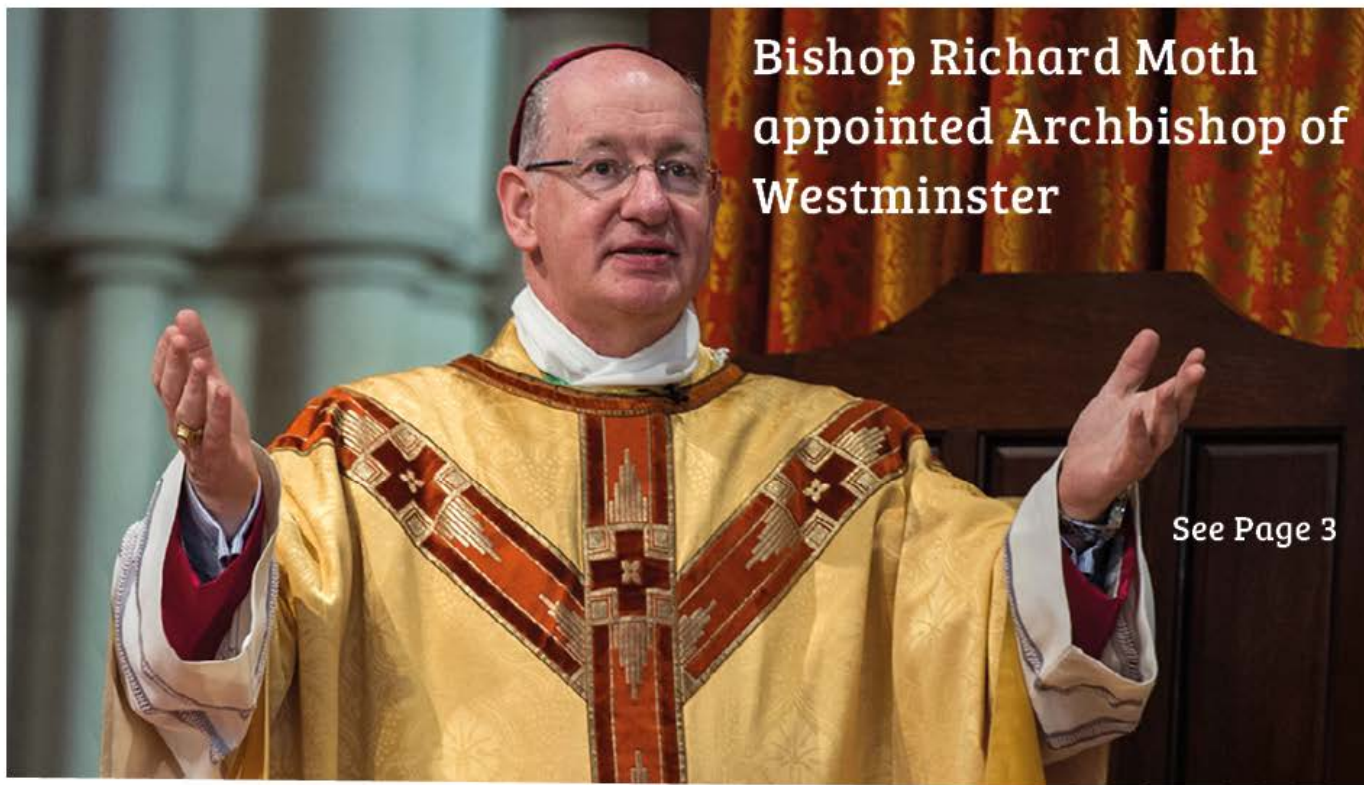


Hallam Bridge



ISSUE 34
December 2025

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



**Bishop Richard Moth
appointed Archbishop of
Westminster**

See Page 3

**An Invitation to Give Thanks for
the Blessings of the Jubilee Year**

**Papal Awards for Service on
Lourdes Pilgrimage**



**An Invitation to Give Thanks for the
Blessings of the Holy Year**

St Marie's Cathedral on 27 December 2025 at 3:30 PM

Find out more on page 9



see page 3

Upcoming Events

27 December Closing of the Jubilee Year 3:30 St Maries
19,26 January Restored Lives, St Vincent's Sheffield
 17 January, Spiritual Reading Group at 10:00-12:00 at Pastoral Centre,
31 Jan 7, 14,28 February CCRS Pastoral Centre

21 March Leneten Recollection - TBA
17 April Fr Casey Cole OFM at St Francis, Sheffield- More Details to Follow

Jubilee Events in the Diocese

27 December Closing of the Jubilee Year 3:30 St Maries



Welcome to the December edition of Hallam Bridge

As Christmas approaches and we begin to hear the angel voices announcing the birth of Jesus, we can look back and give thanks for the many folk who keep the mission of the diocese alive and vibrant. Some of these are acknowledged in this December Hallam Bridge but there are many others who quietly work at their mission for the Kingdom and we thank them. We also invite you, with their consent, to let us know about their work and thank you to all our contributors, for keeping the stories of the diocese available to all. Your thoughts, prayers, letters, poems and stories are welcome.

Bishop Ralph has been busy presenting awards to three loyal Lourdes pilgrimage workers, saying farewell and thanks to the outgoing Lourdes Pilgrimage Director Alex Prior and welcoming the new Lourdes Pilgrimage Director for the Diocese, Dr Russell Brynes, KSS (page 3). Bishop Ralph also features on Page 8, enjoying himself at a Fundraising Dinner Dance along with two smartly elegant parishioners of St Marie's. The event raised a goodly sum for Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust, which is also a cause for celebration. More fundraising took place at Mother of God Church (Page 5). Another cause for celebration is the East Midlands Comprehensive School of the Year Award received by

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 Hallam Pastoral Centre
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 S9 9WU

CONTACT

St Mary's Catholic High School Chesterfield (Page 5) and celebration of another theatrical success by a St Francis parishioner (Page 12). Two notable conferences are reported on, the national conference of the Catholic Deaf Association held in the pleasant surroundings of Hinsley Hall in Leeds and the Inaugural Catholic Diocese Environment Conference held in London (Page 6). Colomba Timmins gives a good account of proceedings there, as she attended on behalf of Hallam Diocese. The Care for Creation group are very active and welcoming; there is to be a conference next year to make space to discuss how caring for the environment is part of our care for the poor and witness to the world. Save the date – 21 March 2026. Our pilgrim news is from Padley (page 7) and from Rome (page 11), plus an invitation to everyone to join Bishop Ralph to give thanks for the blessings of the Holy Year, at Mass of Thanksgiving on 27th December 3:30pm at St Marie's Cathedral (page 9). Two other invitations to note are from the Centre for Catholic Studies, Durham. (page 10), Spiritual Growth and Transformation Course (page 9) and Restored Lives (page 9). Finally we pray for the repose of the soul of Mrs Ann Mappin of UCM (page 5). May she rest in peace and rise in glory. So that's it for 2025.

Wishing all our readers a peaceful and joyful Christmas.
 Editor

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel” .
 Matthew 1:23



May the Peace of the Christ child be with us during this Christmas and during the coming year.

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<https://hallam-diocese.com/bridge/>

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Bishop Richard Moth appointed Archbishop of Westminster



His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has today, 19 December, appointed the Right Reverend Richard Moth as Archbishop of Westminster.

Ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Southwark on 3 July 1982, Archbishop-elect Moth has served as Bishop of Arundel and Brighton since 2015. Prior to that, he was the Catholic Bishop of the Forces from 2009 to 2015.

Archbishop-elect Moth will become the 12th Archbishop of Westminster, succeeding Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who has served in the role since 2009. Cardinal Nichols will now become Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Westminster until Archbishop-elect Moth is Installed at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday, 14 February 2026.

On hearing of his appointment, Archbishop-elect Moth said:

"I am moved greatly by the trust that Pope Leo has placed in me, in appointing me to the Diocese of Westminster. As I prepare to move to the Diocese, I am so grateful for the support being given to me by Cardinal Vincent Nichols at this time. He has given dedicated service to the Diocese and will be missed greatly.

"Serving the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton has given me the wonderful opportunity of sharing the Church's mission with lay faithful and clergy, and I give thanks for the many blessings of these last ten years.

"My first task will be to get to know the priests and people of Westminster and I look forward, now, to serving them. With them, and building on the firm foundations that have been laid by so many down the years, I look forward to continuing the great adventure that is the life of the Church and witness to the Gospel."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols said:

"I am delighted at this news. Archbishop-elect Richard will bring to our Diocese many gifts and considerable episcopal experience from his years of ministry in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, and before that as Bishop of the Forces. I look forward very much to his Installation as our new Archbishop on Saturday, 14 February 2026. It is, of course, St Valentine's Day, as well as the Feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius, co-Patrons of Europe.

"I remember being present in Westminster Cathedral on 29 September 2009 for the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Richard as Bishop of the Forces. So today I can say: 'Welcome back, dear Bishop Richard. You are most welcome indeed.'" **CBCEW**

A video of the press conference with the new Archbishop can be viewed on the Westminster Diocesan Youtube channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV_QiXjxZQ0

Bishop Ralph recently presented two sets of Papal awards.



On Wednesday 5th November 2025, Bishop Ralph celebrated Mass at the end of the Conference of Lourdes Pilgrimage Directors of Great Britain at St. Peter-in-Chains, Doncaster. On his last day as Pilgrimage Director, Alex Prior said a few words on behalf of Bishop Ralph, to recognise the exceptional service given to the Church in this diocese by the three Youth Co-ordinators who have organised the Hallam Youth section of the pilgrimage for the last 15 years. Alistair Weir (All Saints Catholic High School), James Tucker (The McAuley Catholic High School) and John Slade (St Pius X Catholic High School) helped the late Sr Marie Lavin organise Hallam Youth and were then appointed by Bishop John in 2010 as Youth

Co-Ordinators. Each year, Hallam Youth comprises of over 170 people, which is truly remarkable for any diocese, but even more remarkable for a diocese of our size. In his remarks, to Pilgrimage Directors gathered from England, Wales & Scotland, Alex commented that all too often the huge amount of background work that it put in by those leading Youth Teams to Lourdes can go unrecognised but that he was delighted to say that the work of Alistair, James & John was being recognised that night as they had each been awarded the Benemerenti Medal.

He thanked Alistair, James and John on behalf of everyone in the Diocese for the incredible work they've done with Hallam Youth, and for creating such an exceptional pilgrimage experience for our young people, and building and sustaining the interaction within the pilgrimage between Youth Helper and Assisted Pilgrim, which makes the diocesan pilgrimage so wonderful. Before inviting Bishop Ralph to present the Benemerenti Medals, Alex concluded by saying that often we think about these medals being awarded to people of advanced years, in recognition of their exceptional service for the Church, but that the origins of the award is that it was given to the Swiss Guard in recognition of their service, and continues to be awarded to this day in their late 40's and early 50's, so it was fitting that Alistair, James and John receive their medals at this time, with huge thanks and in recognition of what they have achieved to-date.

A different Papal award was conferred on Sunday 23rd November at St Vincent's Church, Sheffield. Bishop Ralph announced that Pope Leo XIV had awarded Dr Russell Brynes a Papal Knighthood, making him a Knight of the Order of St Sylvester. This is in recognition of Dr Russell's huge contribution to the Diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage. Dr Russell first travelled on the diocesan pilgrimage in May 1995 and has travelled on every pilgrimage since then. He was the Pilgrimage Medical Director for many years, and helped and supported other medical professionals through the British Lourdes Medical Association (previously known as the Lourdes Medical Association) and served as their Chair. He also regularly assisted the

Diocese of Paisley Lourdes Pilgrimage when they didn't have a doctor, and were present in Lourdes at the same time as our pilgrimage. At the end of October, Bishop Ralph appointed Dr Russell as the new Lourdes Pilgrimage Director for the Diocese. In addition to his voluntary work in the diocesan pilgrimage, Dr Russell is Chair of the Parish Council at St Vincent's, Sheffield, and an active member of the SVP. He is also a director of the St Francis Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Dr Russell is now, Dr Russell Brynes, KSS. Congratulations to all the recipients for these well-deserved awards, and for everything they have done for our Diocese.

Alex Prior

Caritas News



The Catholic Deaf Association held their national conference at Hinsley Hall, Leeds recently. Caritas Hallam was represented.

An impressive occasion and quite amazing to see how the deaf and hard of hearing can communicate. The importance of inclusion was highlighted with an excellent talk from the Hoy Ghost Father emphasising we all have some handicap and can experience isolation. To be included in normal life as much as possible is so important.

Signed Masses by Father Fletcher National Chaplain for the deaf are available each week on their website catholicdeaf.org.uk.

It is hoped we can arrange a signed Mass in the Diocese in the near future.

Stuart Hanlon

UCM News



UCM News-In Memory of Mrs. Ann Mappin

On Tuesday 2nd December 2025 sadly Mrs. Ann Mappin died. She was in her late eighties and had been an active member of the Union of Catholic Mothers in the UCM Foundation of The Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Victories in the Parish of Clowne, Derbyshire. For five years she held the position of Diocesan Treasurer. She will be greatly missed by her two daughters and grandchildren. May she rest in peace.

Dorothy Anderson

Mother of God Fundraiser Raises £700 for SPUC



Bacon Butties, Christmas cards and a raffle raised nearly £700 for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) at Mother of God, Sheffield.

Profound thanks to everyone who supported and contributed towards its success, especially to the parishioner who donated the bacon for the second-year running! SPUC is the UK's largest and leading pro-life organisation which aims to make abortion unthinkable.

For more information about the Sheffield SPUC Group please contact Rachel on 07368 297 872
Susan Tym

St Mary's Named East Midlands Comprehensive School of the Year



St Mary's Catholic High School Receives Notable Honour in The Sunday Times National Parent Power Guide

St Mary's Catholic High School, Chesterfield, has proudly been named as the Comprehensive School of the Year for the East Midlands in the highly regarded Sunday Times Parent Power Guide. As one of the country's most trusted and influential assessments of school performance, the guide's endorsement represents a significant achievement for the entire school community.

The Parent Power Guide commended St Mary's for its outstanding GCSE and 'A' level outcomes and aspiration for young people. Comment was also made on the school's commitment to ensuring that pupils, from the largest catchment area in the Diocese, can get to school on the school's 10 contracted buses. Maria Dengate (Headteacher) expressed her appreciation for the award, stating: "It is a privilege to lead St Mary's and be a small part of its 160 years of history. I am so fortunate to spend every working day with such wonderful pupils and colleagues; this award is a timely recognition of them."

This award builds on two key inspection outcomes. In 2024, Ofsted judged St Mary's Outstanding in all categories, reflecting its high-quality teaching, exemplary behaviour, and strong pastoral support. Again in 2025, the school secured the top grade in its Section 48 inspection—Outstanding in all nine areas—recognising its deep Catholic ethos and its commitment to the academic and spiritual development of its students.

Marianne Wilkinson



Inaugural Catholic Diocese Environment Conference

Westminster Hall 19 November 2025

This conference was organised by the Catholic Diocesan Leads Network, coordinated by Dr. Emma Gardner, Salford Diocese, Paul Bodenham, Caritas Nottingham, Sián Thomas-Cullinan, Caritas Brentwood and John Paul de Quay, of the Ecological Conversion Group. The purpose was to bring together diocesan Finance and Property officers and Diocesan Environmental Leads from across the UK, to discuss current research and practice in the ecological management of church property. Underpinning the day was the Catholic teaching that right stewardship of God's creation is part of our Christian calling and prophetic mission. In a Mass for Creation in July, Pope Leo said: 'We hear the cry of the earth and of the poor, for that cry has reached the heart of God. Our indignation is His indignation, our work is His work. The church bears witness to the indestructible covenant between Creator and creatures.'

The conference opened with prayer and a message of welcome from Bishop John Arnold, the Bishops' Conference spokesperson for the Environment. Philip Booth, director of policy and research at the Bishops' Conference followed, describing the ecological management of church practice as a signal to the world of our spiritual vocation. 'God looked at all He had made and saw that it was good'. Papal teaching by Pope Paul VI, St. John Paul II, (the first pope to call for a global ecological conversion) Benedict, 'the Green Pope', Pope Francis' in *Laudato Si'*, and now Pope Leo, insists we give proper attention to the way we treat God's gift of earth and life. The Holy Spirit is calling us to repentance and healing.

Next, Matt Fulford, director of inspireefficiency.co.uk, chaired a panel session on decarbonising Catholic Church buildings. His organisation assists churches and schools with energy efficiency measures, and in 2013 managed the first UK conversion to zero carbon of a Grade 1 listed church. Another panel member was Minnie Fraser, Property Surveyor and Environmental Lead for the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, who has direct experience of managing a large portfolio of church and school buildings of all ages and description. She emphasized the value of the Guardians of Creation project: www.cbew.org.uk/guardians-of-creation/

This research project was a collaboration between the Diocese of Salford, St. Mary's University London, and the *Laudato Si'* Research Institute, Oxford University. Its suite of seven reports, each dealing with a separate aspect of diocesan decarbonisation, includes a systematic framework for decarbonising building stocks.

The potential contribution of working with local education establishments, for example on auditing building energy use, was recommended by Rowan Morton-Gledhill from Leeds Diocese, which had experienced mutually valuable cooperation with Leeds Trinity students.

Dr. Emma Gardener underlined the necessity to build resilience to existing and foreseen climate events. Local and national environmental effects are already evident in droughts, floods and poorer harvests. She too noted the opportunities for collaboration with local educational research departments.

Dr. Roland Daw, who managed the Guardians of Creation project, chaired the next panel on strategies for stewardship and finance. Three organisations were referenced: the Inter Diocesan Fuel Management scheme for procuring renewable energy, (which Hallam Diocese has long been signed up to) 2buy2, an organisation which installs electric vehicle chargers on church properties, and churchmarketplace.org.uk which enables the Catholic community to save costs by joint purchasing.

The importance of transparency in sourcing renewable technology was acknowledged: use of forced, trafficked and child labour has been implicated in the production of solar panels and in mining for essential mineral components for batteries.

The final panel was chaired by John Paul de Quay of the Ecological Conversion Group <https://theecg.org/> which supports Catholic communities to become living examples of the world we would like to see. We are one body: if one part suffers, so does the whole. To care for the environment is to care for the poor, for God's creation, and for those who inherit what we leave behind.

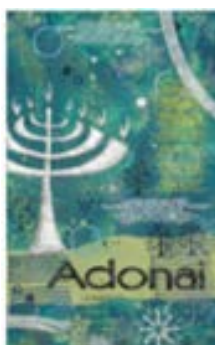
A stirring talk from Lord Deben urged civic engagement: care for creation is at the heart of the Gospel, not an added extra, and the Church forms a huge constituency. Encourage each other. Write to your MPs, attend their surgeries in person and they will know you are serious and part of a shared enterprise.

Grace Thomas, Canon Missioner at Manchester Cathedral and Environmental Officer for the Diocese of Manchester, offered a reflection on building interfaith networks across dioceses and echoed Bishop John's consistent message that hope is nourished by the smallest of actions. Recall the widow's mite and the mustard seed.

Paul Bodenham from Nottingham Diocese summarized the thoughts and discussions of the day. Property department delegates particularly appreciated the importance of meeting together in this way. Priests remarked on the absence of Creation care teaching during their formation. The gathering inspired a sense of common purpose and sparked a strong appetite for continued collaboration across dioceses and their departments.

Columba Timmins

Hallam Diocese environment representative at the Conference.



Padley Chapel's 'Pilgrims of Hope' 2025



Pope Francis called us to be 'Pilgrims of Hope' in this Year of Jubilee 2025 and undertake physical and spiritual pilgrimages to strengthen our faith and cultivate hope, in a challenging world.

The Diocese of Hallam responded fully to Pope Francis' call. Padley Chapel saw a 30% increase in Pilgrims and visitors, compared to the previous year. Twenty five masses were celebrated there throughout the year. The National Jubilee icon, a painting by Mulugeta Araya, came to Padley Chapel for veneration, at the annual Inter Diocesan Pilgrimage. Over 200 children from Hallam's primary schools came for mass on a beautiful summer's day.

The National Jubilee Pilgrimage of Hope (St Mark's Way - North) passed through Hallam and visited Padley Chapel. The supportive welcome provided by Hallam's parishes was outstanding. The podcast 'All Kinds of Catholic' - 'The celebration of Holy Mass, where Heaven and earth meet,' (Episode 70), shares Padley Chapel's history and spiritual significance with an international audience.

So we have a strong base for continuing to build on Padley Chapel's Pilgrimage tradition in 2026. Please contact friendsofpadley@hallam-diocese.com, for enquiries about booking Padley Chapel for a group pilgrimage in 2026.

If you would like to be a Welcomer at Padley Chapel in 2026, please enquire using this email. New Welcomers will receive a warm welcome, with full training and support.

Gerard Bonner

Dinner dance raises more than £12,600 for Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust



The generosity of the Hallam Diocese shone recently at the Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust Dinner Dance at the Royal Victoria Hotel.

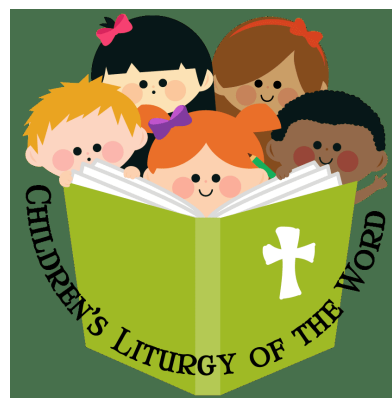
The event successfully raised an incredible £12,640 for the charity's vital work. The event, which saw 133 guests attend, provided a significant boost to the Sheffield-based charity's mission of providing specialist palliative care to the sick and terminally ill in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The trust runs the only licensed domiciliary palliative care service in the region. The successful evening featured a popular online silent auction, a tombola and a prize draw, all contributing to the remarkable total. A special note of thanks went to the band - The Grand Plan - who generously gave up their fee for the night in support of the charity's crucial work. The charity's important work is also being actively championed by children across the diocese. The enthusiasm for the charity has also been embraced by St Marie's, St Wilfrid's and St Thomas of Canterbury in Sheffield as they learn more about the real meaning of Christmas. St Theresa's Catholic Primary School in Sheffield also raised £400 through events including toy sales and toast stalls. To help the children connect with the trust's mission and the Holy Land, Joe and Philomena McNally, two of the charity's trustees, recently visited the schools, bringing with them a wide selection of cribs from around the world.

This offered pupils a unique and engaging way to explore and learn about the real story of Christmas. The exhibitions help foster a sense of global Catholic community and compassion among the young people. Mr McNally said: "We are very grateful to everyone - young and old - who help us help those in most need in Bethlehem. "All money raised in these various ways across the diocese goes to such an important cause, assisting those approaching the end of their lives." The Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust, which operates out of the Hallam Pastoral Centre, relies entirely on donations to provide its essential, free-of-charge services.

The charity ensures every person, regardless of their background or circumstances, receives compassionate, high-quality care to live out their remaining lifetime with dignity and in comfort. If you would like to know more about the Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust, please visit bethlehemcareandhospicetrust.org

Lee Siggs

Resources for Liturgy of the Word with Children

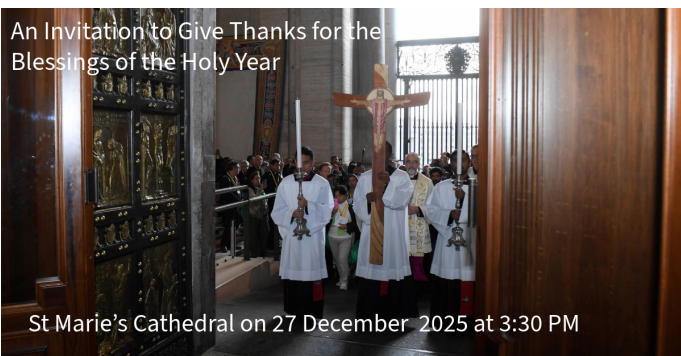


Equipes Notre-Dame (Teams of Our Lady) have provided a mini-ordo a listing Sundays with dates, scripture, themes and additional calendar items. It is developed with Liturgy of the Word with Children in mind, but it is also useful for other church programmes that work to the Sunday calendar of readings

There are links for Children's Liturgy resources on this site www.lottwc.org.uk

Looking Ahead

An Invitation to Give Thanks for the Blessings of the Holy Year



An Invitation to Give Thanks for the Blessings of the Holy Year

St Marie's Cathedral on 27 December 2025 at 3:30 PM

Pilgrims walking through the Holy Door at St Peter's, Rome, Jubilee of Synodal Teams ©Synodus Episcoporum

Pope Leo will close the Holy Door in St Peter's Basilica on 6 January 2026 and bring the Jubilee Year to a close. Across the world, dioceses will conclude their Holy Year on the Feast of the Holy Family. Bishop Ralph invites you, the Pilgrim People of God, both lay and ordained, to a Mass of Thanksgiving for the blessings of this Holy Year at St Marie's Cathedral on 27 December at 3:30 PM, the vigil of the Feast of the Holy Family.

Restored Lives



Restored lives is an 8 week programme to help people recover from relationship breakdown due to separation or divorce. There is no time limit for when that happened. St Vincent's Church, Crookes is offering this face to face programme starting Monday evening 19 January.

Dates

are: 19/26 January 2026, 2/23 February 2026,

2/9/16/23 March 2026.

Timings

: 7pm-8.45pm. Please see <https://www.restoredlives.org/> for more information.

Total cost

of 8 week programme to cover materials and refreshments:

£15.

If £15 is an issue for you, please let us know in your email, as we want to offer the course to anyone who wants to attend, and funding may be available. Please email restored.lives.sheffield@gmail.com to book your place. Please note: by emailing us, you are confirming that you consent to St Vincent's Church holding and processing your personal data to email you and provide you with further information. The Privacy Notice is available from the Parish Office

Spiritual Growth and Transformation

Are you looking for more in your faith? Or feeling called to walk alongside others in their journeys of faith?

This course offers a programme of prayer, listening and reflection through which participants are supported in drawing closer to God. It has been a turning point for many, in their own lives and in their support of others. It also forms the first part of the Sheffield Anglican Diocese's programme for authorised Spiritual Accompaniers. It is happening from March to July 2026 and this time it's partly online with 14 Wednesday evening sessions on Zoom plus three Saturdays at Whirlow and a weekend retreat at Ilkley. The closing date for applications is 1 December 2025. The total cost is subsidised at just £200. For more information, including dates, and a downloadable leaflet, see <https://www.sheffield.anglican.org/learning/courses/spiritual-growth-transformation>.

Calling Catholic women worldwide:

share your voice on safeguarding



Centre for Catholic Studies

We're inviting women connected to the Catholic Church—whether lay or religious—to take part in the WISE Project (Women's Insights into Safeguarding Efforts in the Catholic Church).

This international study, led by researchers from Australian Catholic University, Tangaza University and the Global Safeguarding Alliance, explores how women perceive current safeguarding practices for children and vulnerable adults within the Church, and how these can be improved.

Who can participate? Women aged 18+ who are part of the Catholic Church, contributing as laypeople, religious sisters, or working in Catholic organisations.

What's involved? A 20–30 minute anonymous online survey with both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Your insights will help shape future safeguarding policies and elevate women's voices in Church safety efforts. Why participate? Your perspective matters. Help us understand what's working, what's not, and how safeguarding can better protect everyone in Church communities. Link to survey <https://bit.ly/4kGSKWZ>

Questions?

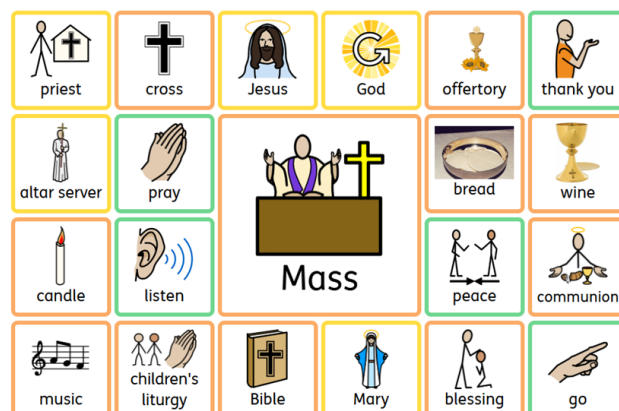
Contact the research team at douglas.russell@acu.edu.au

Please share this post with others who may be eligible. Together, we can strengthen safeguarding in the Church.

The project has received ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (Project: 2025-4280E) Dr Marcus Pound, Dept. Theology & Religion, Durham University

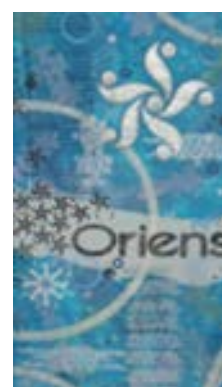
Theresa Phillips

Using Widgit Symbols to Promote Inclusion in the Church



Widgit symbols are simple colourful pictures that represent single concepts, and are used to support people with their communication, understanding and engagement. They can be adapted and personalised for an individual or group. They have been used at St Vincent's Church, Crookes during the past year to support individuals to follow the Mass, in the Liturgy for Children and in labelling key areas in the Church, for example. They will be part of the resources available for the First Communion programme in 2026. Hallam Diocese may consider purchasing licences for parishes to produce their own materials if there is enough interest. Please contact the Formation and Mission Team if this is something you would like to develop in your parish.

Katharine Ryan-Murray



“Implement the Synod, a task for which all the Baptised share responsibility”*



Jubilee of Synodal Teams Rome October 25th 2025

Part One: When the date for the Pilgrimage of the Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies was added to the Jubilee Schedules from Rome, one of the Hallam Synod Team participants was secretly delighted that the date coincided with their birthday so they would be meeting with Pope Leo on that day. The team were pleased to have the opportunity to network and hear from other synod coordinators from across the world and from members of the Vatican Synod Office, about the activities and reflections on the work so far and plans for the Implementation Phase. (See PIPS, 'Pathways for the Implementation Phase of the Synod 2025-2028') Pope Francis commissioned the implementation of the Synod in March 2024. Pope Leo confirmed this in June 2025, asking that the process is moved forward with concern for the unity of the Church, taking into account the different church contexts. The Implementation Plan schedule is this:

June 2025 to December 2026 Implementation Activities in local churches.

WE ARE HERE! This is a time for learning how to make use of the synodal method of listening with the heart and collective discernment, in the business of the church. Any gathering in the church can make use of the method, from the Council of Priests, Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Conversations in the Spirit, Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings to Spiritual Reading Group meetings, SVP and NBCW meetings. If you need to learn more on how to do it, there are on-line training materials on School for Synodality YouTube channel, support from the Diocesan Formation and Mission Team, and some useful books also available. But it was generally agreed by all the Synod Coordinators in Rome that the best way to learn Synod is to do Synod. From January to June 2027

Evaluation Assembly in the Diocese; we will review

our progress in implementing the Synod with a Diocesan Assembly. After this, there will be July 27 to April 2028 Evaluation National then Continental Assemblies and finally October 2028 Ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican.

Babel

The workshops and talks that we attended over the weekend were inspirational. There were 5 different language translations provided for most workshops. Participants were able to choose which language to follow on their own headphones on differently numbered channels. It was an exciting reminder of the global church and enlivening to be part of.

Programme Day 1

Cardinal Grech began with a talk on

The Church, hope, and the future

suggesting that the synodal approach, with the theological virtues of faith, love, and hope, can guide the Church's identity and mission. He drew inspiration from Charles Péguy's reflections on hope. He concludes that love is the foundation of communal life and service within the Church, faith anchors believers in truth despite imperfections, and hope calls the Church to look to the future with humility and trust in God. As Péguy reminds us, 'hope loves what has not yet come

—what will unfold in the future and in eternity.'

Cardinal Rys then talked on Synodality in the Face of Tensions within the Church

. He identified three major tensions revealed by synodality: the struggle between ME/I individualism and US/WE community, the challenge of achieving unity without enforcing uniformity but achieving harmony in diversity, and the balance between self-preservation and outward mission. He argued that true community and unity are built through relational conversion, acceptance of diversity, and humble dialogue, rather than competition, pride, or the abuse of power. Resolving these tensions requires deep conversion to an outward-facing church, embracing the spirit of synodality, rather than mere reform or improvement.

Dr Mariana Aparecida Venancio spoke of Synodality as Social Prophecy then representatives from 7 geographical regions presented reports on the challenges and changes introduced to implement synodality in their territories followed by a question each to the Pope Leo.

This was a fascinating session and presentations, questions and Pope Leo's responses will be described in the next edition of Hallam Bridge.

(...to be continued) **F Frances**

Looking Ahead Synodality 101 workshops start next month



Want to learn more about Synodality, our resources, and be trained to hold a conversation in the spirit in your community? Join our 101's starting January 20th! Why not place this to your parish/organisation newsletters? Sign up soon!

Theatre Review



"Null Hypothesis – Hope is the Key to Survival"

Theatrical Success for Tim Baron

St Francis' parishioner, Tim Baron, has achieved another notable theatrical success with the recent performance of his new play, "Null Hypothesis: Hope is the key to survival", staged at the Lantern Theatre in Nether Edge, Sheffield. Many members of St Francis' congregation will recall with affection the Christmas pantomimes penned by Tim in previous years. However, he appears to have redirected his considerable linguistic abilities and flair for the esoteric towards more serious writing in this latest work.

"Null Hypothesis" is an expansive and stimulating piece, engaging with themes such as time, science, life and death, and human relationships. The play's subtitle, along with enigmatic quotations included in the programme, signposts the audience towards its thought-provoking nature, offering hints rather than clear explanations about the play's underlying message.

With a compact cast, the actors are required to deliver demanding performances, particularly Kirsty Lucas (Ellie) and Matt Hutchinson (Mark), who are present on stage for almost the entire duration. The play commences with the prickly exchanges between Mark and Ellie, and the evolving tone of their relationship, as they appear to be engaged in a scientific experiment within the confines of an old house.

Initially, the setting and interactions may seem relatively conventional. However, a striking shift in mood occurs with the entrance of the unsettling pair, Cathy (Sue Burgess) and Bert (Phil Eardley), who present themselves as caretakers of the house. Their presence injects a sense of unease and foreboding into the narrative.

Offering further detail about the plot would risk revealing its twists, but it is safe to say that those who appreciate plays filled with intellectual challenges, suspense, unexpected turns, and ample material for post-show discussion will find much to enjoy in "Null Hypothesis". It comes highly recommended for anyone seeking a thought-provoking theatrical experience.

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