

# Hallam Bridge

ISSUE 39  
May 2026

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

## Leeds Hallam and Middlesbrough Consultation at All Saints , Sheffield



See page 6

### Sheila Parden retires after 37 Years serving the Diocese

### Bishop Marcus extends the Consultation about the future of the diocese to 19 June



See page 7

See page 6



## Upcoming Events

**19 June** Diocesan Consultation Deadline

**20 June, 18 July** Spiritual Reading Group at 10:00-12:00 at Pastoral Centre,

**26 June- 2 July** Lourdes Pilgrimage

**4 July** Women Together in Hallam Pastoral Centre

**10 July** Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Bishop Ralph 11:30 Cathedral

**12 July**, Padley Pilgrimage

**25 July** Walsingham Pilgrimage

## Welcome to the May edition of the Hallam Bridge

Welcome to the last-but-one edition of Hallam Bridge! As part of our ongoing collaboration with the Diocese of Leeds and the Diocese of Middlesborough, to foster communication across the region, in July we will see Hallam news subsumed under a new print and e-edition of Northern Catholic Voice. More on this next month.

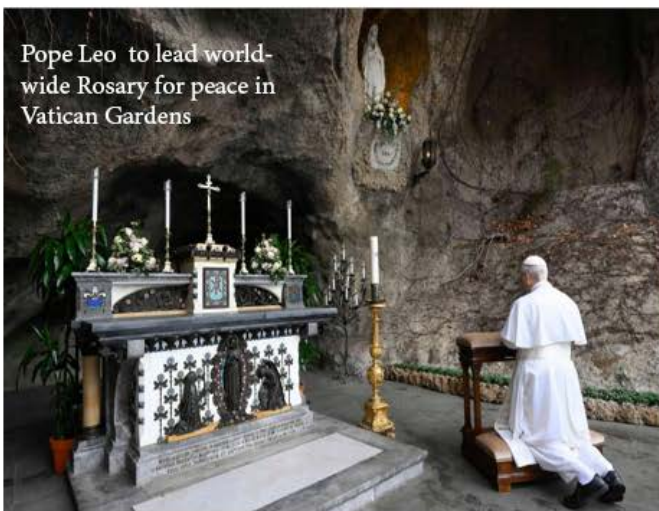
Meanwhile, we continue to bring you news and information local, national and international. You can read about the Hallam/Leeds/Middlesborough reunification consultation meeting with Bishop Marcus on Page 6. The big news for worldwide Catholics this month is the arrival of Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical 'Magnifica Humanitas'. There is a brief summary of the document on page 3 and there will be a study session on this in the near future at the Pastoral Centre, to provide an opportunity to learn about the document together. Or why not organise one in your own parish?

In local news, Bishop Ralph is celebrating Mass for the Golden Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood to which all are invited (Page 5) and we say farewell to the voice at the end of the phone for many years at Bishop's House, Sheila Parden (page 7). Christine Parrott takes inspiration from the life and work of David Attenborough and Amanda Campbell reports on the Ecumenical World Day of Prayer Service, this year held in Corpus Christi Parish at the Church of the Sacred

Heart, Goldthorpe (Page 10). Padley Chapel is now open for the summer opening schedule and Gerard Bonner, Hallam archivist and historian, shares some thoughts about the link between Padley Chapel and Beauchief Abbey (Page 11). Angela Powell raises the issue of the burden of debt on the poor and the CAFOD campaign to tackle the debt crisis (Page 11). Michael Curry from Our Lady of Perpetual Help and English Martyrs, Doncaster, talks of the enjoyment of his work for CAFOD (Page 14). Parishioners from St William of York parish and St Vincent's parish report on a visit to the Laudato Si centre in Salford (Page 13) and Tina Paul from St William's parish describes ongoing Conversations on Catholic Teachings (Page 12).

Some of these events will doubtless be gathered as stories of the ongoing synodal journeying together to be reported on as part of the diocesan implementation phase of the Synod on Synodality described in more detail on Page 7. Remember to send in your 'Journeying Together' stories, to: [communications@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:communications@hallam-diocese.com)

And finally ,some invitations for you:  
Padley Pilgrimage on 12 July (page 6);  
A Contemplative Spirituality Summit;  
a retreat from the Ecological Conversion group;  
Beloved by God. School for Synodality Retreat  
and World Youth Day in Seoul (See page 16);  
Our Lady of Guadalupe Relic to visit to Mother of God Church on 6 June;  
and a reminder about the first meeting of Women Together in Hallam on 4th July. (Pg 14).  
June blessings. Editor.



Join Pope Leo who will preside over the recitation of the Holy Rosary at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in the Vatican Gardens, today Saturday, May 30, at 6:00 pm, (BST) at the conclusion of the Marian month.

All people and all Shrines around the world are invited to join him in praying the Rosary. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEM7a3mHMR4>

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**CONTACT**

## Pope Leo's 'Magnifica humanitas': AI must serve humanity not concentrate power



Marking the 135th anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, Pope Leo XIV releases his first encyclical, entitled 'Magnifica humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence.' He appeals for the safeguarding of humanity, promotion of truth, dignity of work, social justice, and peace.  
By Isabella Piro – Vatican News

"Humanity, created by God in all its grandeur, is today facing a pivotal choice: either to construct a new Tower of Babel or to build the city in which God and humanity dwell together." The opening words of Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence*, summarise its underlying reasons and purpose. Published on Monday, May 25, the Pope signed the encyclical on 15 May, the 135th anniversary of the promulgation of Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum*

Pope Leo XIV has taken up the legacy of his predecessor, writing a social encyclical which addresses one of the principal challenges of the contemporary age: artificial intelligence.

Divided into five chapters, *Magnifica humanitas* has an underlying premise: technology is not "a force antagonistic to humanity" (4), nor is it "inherently evil" (9). However, "technology is never neutral, because it takes on the characteristics of those who devise, finance, regulate, and use it. Therefore, Pope Leo XIV appeals for people to build "for the common good" and to "remain human," following a

courageous mentality of shared responsibility and communion, so that the world "will come to recognise the human heart as the place where God desires to dwell" (16).

### Church's social doctrine

The first chapter—"A Dynamic Approach Faithful to the Gospel" – traces the Social Doctrine of the Church in recent magisterium and the Second Vatican Council, highlighting "its dynamic character" (17). Far from being "a handbook of principles and norms to be applied," the Church's social teaching is rather a "theology of communion in history" (27), which guides our reading of events in light of the Gospel. Pope Leo XIV recalls the writings of his predecessors: from Pius XII – the first to use the expression "Social Doctrine of the Church" in his Apostolic Exhortation *Menti Nostrae*

of 1950 – to Pope Francis. He recalled Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of 1891, which "constitutes a milestone in the development of the Church's social teaching" (30). In the years following, each successor of Peter "interpreted historical changes according to the Gospel, bringing to light different aspects of a single heritage: the dignity of the person, the value of work, the universal destination of goods, solidarity and subsidiarity, care for creation and the centrality of peace and fraternity" (45).

### Safeguarding human dignity

In the second chapter, Pope Leo XIV explores the "*Foundations and Principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church*".

These foundations, he says, include the dignity of the person, created in the image and likeness of God. It is important to recall this since "the pressure of new ideologies or certain highly powerful interests" can reduce the human person to "a resource to be used and exploited" or "on what they achieve or produce" (51). On the contrary, "the fundamental dignity of each person...is neither acquired nor earned, nor does it need to be justified" (53). A second foundation of the Social Doctrine of the Church is the inviolability of human rights, among which

the first is the right to life “from conception to its natural end.” In this regard, Leo XIV defines induced abortion, the killing of the innocent, and euthanasia as “choices that the Church considers gravely wrong” (55). The third foundation is the recognition of the rights of minorities, with particular attention to women. The Pope calls for “concrete decisions” in their favor regarding laws, employment, education, in social and political responsibilities, so that they may be truly heard and valued (57).

### **‘Gravely immoral’ to subjugate a nation**

Pope Leo XIV then identifies five principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The first is the common good, and the Pope defines it as “the social expression of the dignity recognized in every person” (59). He forcefully affirms that “the promotion of the common good can never be separated from respect for the right of peoples to exist, to preserve their own identity and to contribute their unique qualities to the family of nations.” Therefore, he says, “any attempt or plan to eliminate or subjugate a nation is gravely immoral and therefore unacceptable” (64).

### **Technology must not be in the hands of a few**

The Pope then identifies the second principle of the “universal destination of goods.” At this point, and in other parts of the encyclical, Pope Leo XIV insists on the need to ensure that technologies are not concentrated in the hands of only a few people, thereby widening the gap between those included and those excluded from the digital revolution (67). The third principle, subsidiarity (68), requires humanity to overcome “any form of paternalistic or welfare-based management of societal life” in favor of shared responsibility. Solidarity (73), the fourth principle, is both “a principle and a virtue,” says the Pope, noting it is opposed to indifference and takes into account people and future generations.

### **Social justice and the ‘litmus test’ regarding migrants**

Social justice is the fifth principle of the Social Doctrine of the Church. In the digital age, social justice requires ensuring fair access to opportunities for all people, protecting the most vulnerable, combating hatred and disinformation, and subjecting the use of

technologies to public oversight, “so that the guiding principle is not solely profit but the dignity of every person and the common good of all people” (80). Pope Leo XIV identifies migrants, refugees, displaced persons as a “litmus test” for social justice. The way society treats migrants, he says, “reveals whether its sense of justice is driven by fear or by the spirit of fraternity.” He therefore appeals for societies to protect “the rightful hopes” of those forced to leave, by ensuring them safe and legal routes, dignified welcome, and genuine paths to integration, while promoting “the right to remain” in one’s homeland in peace and security, by addressing “the root causes” of migration (81).

### **Abuse and the examination of conscience by the Church**

The Pope says these five principles should be applied not only to society, but also to the Church herself, which is called to carry out “an examination of conscience.” The Pope says living out this justice calls for “purifying ecclesial relationships and structures from distortions that give rise to inequality, lack of transparency and abuse of power.” This means to listen to the “victims of spiritual, economic, institutional, sexual and power-based abuse, as well as abuses of conscience.” This examen, he says, “is an integral part of a journey toward justice, which includes acknowledging the harm done, just reparation and taking steps to prevent it from happening again” (89).

### **An ethical code for AI**

The third chapter—*Technology and Dominance.*

*The Grandeur of Humanity in Light of the*

*Promises of AI*—stresses the need to approach artificial intelligence with vigilance.

Pope Leo warns about the “technocratic paradigm” already denounced by Pope Francis and how it can require that every choice be dictated exclusively by measuring efficiency and profits (92). On the contrary, the most powerful technology is not necessarily the best. AI can imitate and simulate the person, but it does not possess a moral conscience, empathy, or affective, relational or spiritual capabilities. The Pope urges clarity about responsibilities and accountability at

every stage of the development process, focusing on adequate AI policies and legal frameworks, independent oversight, and user education. Above all, Pope Leo calls for an ethical code subject to shared standards of social justice, because “a more moral AI is not enough if that morality is determined by a few” (107). Nor, he adds, should the environmental impact of new technologies be overlooked, since they require large quantities of energy and water, affecting Creation (101).

### **Disarming AI**

AI must be “disarmed,” Pope Leo XIV continues, in order to free it from the mentality of military, economic, and cognitive competition. “To disarm means discrediting the assumption that technical power automatically confers the right to govern,” he says. “To disarm does not mean rejecting technology, but preventing it from dominating humanity” (110). He devotes ample space to a critique of transhumanism and posthumanism, which interpret progress as the overcoming of human limits. Instead, limitations are not defects to be eliminated, but a constitutive dimension of the human person, because it is in fragility and finitude that relationship and openness to God and to others mature. He says we must remember that “humanity flourishes not despite limitations, but often through them” (118).

### **Technological progress without regression of the heart**

Pursuing technological innovation at the expense of eliminating human limitations, he says, would cause an anthropological regression. “Humanity—in all its grandeur and woundedness—must never be replaced or surpassed,” he says. Technology can alleviate humanity’s sufferings and open new possibilities, but it must not deny the essence of humanity, which is our “capacity for relationship and love” (126). In the face of AI, says the Pope, “the true alternative is not between enthusiasm and fear, but between two paths of development: a progress that serves individuals and peoples, or a progress that subjects them to the mentality of power” (129).

### **An ecology of communication and the centrality of schools**

In the fourth chapter—

### *Safeguarding Humanity at a Time of Transformation. Truth, Work, Freedom*

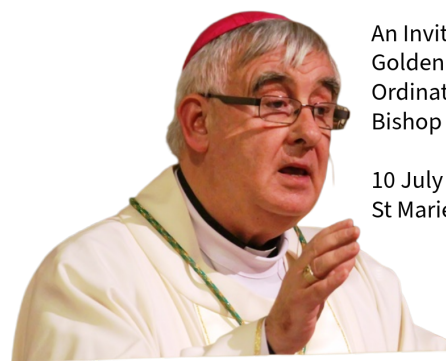
—the Pope calls for an “ecology of communication” based on truth. He urges transparency in how content is selected, protection of personal data, serious journalism founded on argumentation and verification, a new awareness in the “proper and critical” use of digital tools, and the integration of different forms of knowledge. The Church must also embody transparent and honest communication, especially in cases of injustice and abuse. The Pope also appeals for a renewed educational alliance, so that the “desire to ask questions” may not be extinguished in young people by perfect machines that make human thought seem useless (140). Pope Leo XIV therefore calls for renewed attention to schools as places where people learn to “seek and love the truth” (147).

### **The dignity of work**

In the “fourth industrial revolution” represented by the digital transition, the Pope emphasises the importance of protecting the dignity of work by designing systems centered on the person and not only on performance.

**Isabella Piro** – Vatican News

## **Golden Jubilee of the Ordination to the Priesthood of Bishop Ralph Heskett CSsR**



An Invitation to Celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Ordination to the Priesthood of Bishop Ralph Heskett CSsR

10 July 2026 11:30 am  
St Marie's Cathedral

You are invited to give thanks for the gift of Bishop Ralph as he celebrates his fiftieth anniversary of ordination on Friday, 10th July. He will preside at Mass at 11:30am at the Cathedral Church of St Marie. This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to give thanks to Almighty God for the priestly ministry of Bishop Ralph but also to thank him for the twelve years of his ministry as Bishop of the Diocese of Hallam.

## Hallam, Leeds & Middlesbrough Re-unification Consultation Meeting Held in Sheffield



The current consultation about the possible reunification of the dioceses of Leeds, Middlesbrough and Hallam is coming to a close. The consultation process led by Bishop Marcus Stock has been transparent and all the People of God of Hallam have been offered opportunity to respond, either on-line, in meetings in their parish, or in larger or focused consultation meetings with Bishop Marcus. There was an invited meeting of parish priests and representatives from half of the diocese of Hallam held on Friday 22 May. It was a good example of the dynamic use of the synodal method to hold Conversations in the Spirit among the 74 people sat at round tables of about 10 people making use of the kind hospitality of All Saints School. As Bishop Marcus noted, the meeting arrangements fortuitously mirrored that of the Rome Synod on Synodality, which he had had the privilege to attend. It was clear also that what he learned from having twice attended on behalf of the Bishops' Conference enabled him to experience and value the synodal method, and confidently adapt it as appropriate to the context. The opening phase of prayer, scripture and reflection time was followed by periods of deep listening, respectful exchanges and thoughtful offerings. Ideas were gathered and will form part of Bishop Marcus' deliberations in the report he will send to Pope Leo to consider the future of the diocese. There is still time to give your view as **the on-line consultation deadline has been extended to 19 June and can be found at:**

<https://forms.office.com/e/fDJRiRxj25>

The structure of the consultation, the

servant-leadership role of the bishop and the decision-making responsibility were made clear as part of the process. Some questions were raised which Bishop Marcus was able to give an immediate response to. For example, if we are to re-unify (and 'reunification' rather than the word 'merger', with its corporate overtones was preferred), would we get to keep our Cathedral? Yes, said Bishop Marcus, pointing out that the civic relationships and structures built up in the diocese are valued and need to be retained. Other points raised were about the opportunities that might be available from the wider resources of the combined dioceses, the opportunity for improved communication, lay involvement and learning from and respecting the richness provided by minority groups. There were also anxieties expressed about the emotional attachment to the identity of Hallam and what would be lost, not getting to see the bishop much, small parishes getting overlooked and the worry about potential rivalry between the dioceses. Giving consideration to the impact of any changes to the well-being of all was acknowledged by Bishop Marcus as important. But as was wisely pointed out by one speaker from the floor, any challenge can also be seen as an opportunity (and an opportunity a challenge!). It was a warm, deeply reflective meeting, which participants said they found positive and reassuring. It appeared that the priests of the diocese and the People of God cooperated with the Holy Spirit to respond in faith with generosity and good will.

### F Frances



## Padley Pilgrimages

Inter diocesan Padley Pilgrimage, Rt Rev Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham presiding at the Pilgrims Mass on the 12th July and Mgr. John Armitage, Master of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom preaching.

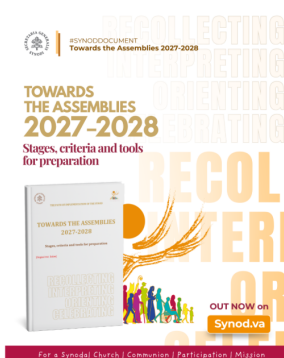
The schools' Pilgrimage is on 14 July, Mgr Desmond Sexton presiding.

## Sheila Parden retires after 37 Years of Service to the Diocese



With great thanks and good wishes, two Bishops, Hallam Diocese Trustees and friends celebrated with Sheila Parden as she retired from 37 years of service to the Diocese. In fact, Sheila has worked with 3 Bishops! From an initial post working in the Chancery, at the time of Bishop Gerard Moverly, she then worked in an administrative role with Bishop John Rawsthorne and then Bishop Ralph Heskett. At the same time she raised a family of 5 children. Her management and organisational skills were doubtless helpful in both roles. Bishop John joined Bishop Ralph to wish her well, personally and on behalf of the whole diocese.

## Towards the Ecclesial Assembly of October 2028



Guidelines published for the path of implementation of the Synod on Synodality Vatican, 20 May 2026

Four stages — Recollecting, Interpreting, Orienting, Celebrating — will accompany the local Churches, Episcopal Conferences, and continental groupings of Churches on the path leading to the Ecclesial Assembly to be held in the Vatican in October 2028. Two documents will be prepared at the conclusion of each

assembly. A common question will guide the entire process.

To support the implementation phase of the Synod, the General Secretariat of the Synod today publishes the document: *Towards the Assemblies 2027-2028: stages, criteria, and tools for preparation*. The text specifies the calendar, methodology, and criteria through which local Churches throughout the world, together with their national and continental groupings, are invited to share the fruits of the journey undertaken following the Final Document of the 2021-2024 Synod, culminating in the Ecclesial Assembly of October 2028.

The four stages of the journey

The process, which will culminate at each stage in the celebration of an assembly, unfolds in four successive moments, marked by key verbs that highlight their ecclesial and spiritual purpose:

**Recollecting** — first semester of 2027. Evaluation Assemblies in Dioceses and Eparchies, called to reread the experience of implementing the Final Document through a narrative report and a letter to the other Churches.

**Interpreting** — second semester of 2027. Assemblies of Episcopal Conferences (national or regional), which will prepare a theological-pastoral report and a letter to the other local Churches.

**Orienting** — first four months of 2028. Continental Assemblies, from which a perspective report will emerge, capable of identifying shared priorities and orientations.

**Celebrating** — October 2028. Ecclesial Assembly of the Church as a whole, in the Vatican, together with the Holy Father: the journey undertaken will be brought into unity and entrusted to the discernment of the whole Church.

At every level, the Assembly does not constitute

the final moment of the process, but rather a celebratory moment of assessment, synthesis, and above all renewed impetus for the Church's synodal conversion.

A common question

To preserve the unity of the process is a common question, which each stage is invited to articulate within its own context:

In light of the journey undertaken after the conclusion of the 2021-2024 Synod, and with a view to offering its fruits as a gift to the other Churches and to the Holy Father: what concrete form of a missionary synodal Church and what new paths of synodality are emerging in your community?

The fruits of each stage: the exchange of gifts among the Churches

The document clarifies that this is not a matter of repeating the Synod consultation, nor of adding further tasks to the ordinary life of communities, but rather of rereading what has already been experienced, recognizing its fruits and difficulties, and making the experience gained available within a logic of exchange of gifts among the Churches.

The first two Assemblies (those at the local and national levels) will produce two complementary texts: a document of rereading — the narrative report for Dioceses and Eparchies, and the theological-pastoral report for Episcopal Conferences — together with a letter to the other local Churches, drafted during the Assembly itself. It is precisely this latter document that constitutes the concrete instrument of the exchange of gifts: each community offers what it has brought to maturity and opens itself to receive what the other Churches offer in turn. The Continental Assemblies, on the other hand, will prepare a perspective report that will contribute to the drafting of the *Instrumentum laboris* (working document) for the 2028 Ecclesial Assembly.

All materials will be transmitted to the General Secretariat of the Synod according to a precise

calendar: by 30 June 2027 for the diocesan and eparchial stage; by 31 December 2027 for the stage of the Episcopal Conferences; and by 30 April 2028 for the continental stage, in preparation for the Ecclesial Assembly of October 2028.

The words of Cardinal Grech "What we are proposing to the local Churches — states Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod — is not an additional task, but rather a time of shared discernment and thanksgiving, in which to reread together what the Spirit is causing to grow in the Church and to recognize the steps we are called to take. The Assemblies do not coincide with a sociological consultation or a deliberative process, nor are they a technical assessment. Rather, they are a profound ecclesial and spiritual experience of discernment: a moment of synthesis and renewed impetus for the journey, so that the exchange of gifts among the Churches may become a concrete experience and synodality may increasingly take shape as the ordinary style of ecclesial life at the service of mission."

Composition of the Assemblies, responsibility, and methodology The document emphasizes that the composition of the Assemblies must correspond to their purpose. In selecting participants, due attention should be given to the balance between men and women and among different generations, to cultural and ecclesial diversity — including presbyters, deacons, consecrated women and men, members of associations, movements and new communities, as well as faithful not belonging to organized structures — and to the presence of persons living in situations of fragility or marginality. Particular care should be devoted to the involvement of parish priests. Where appropriate, representatives of other Churches and Christian Communions or other religions may also participate. Essential, however, is that those selected be willing to sustain the process even beyond 2028, thereby helping to ensure its continuity.

Responsibility for the process belongs to the

diocesan or eparchial bishop for the local Assemblies, to the president of the Episcopal Conference for the national or regional Assemblies, and to those responsible for the continental bodies at that level. Synodal teams, established at every level, are entrusted with the organization and coordination of the work.

As regards methodology, the document encourages maintaining conversation in the Spirit, now widely practiced and adopted, as the privileged methodological reference.

#### Tools and accompaniment

The document belongs within the implementation phase of the Synod, the third stage of the process outlined in the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio*, following the consultation of the People of God (2021–2023) and the celebratory phase, culminating in the two sessions of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023 and October 2024. Opened by Pope Francis with the handing over of the Final Document, this phase has subsequently been confirmed and promoted by Pope Leo XIV. Today's text gives more concrete form to what had already been anticipated in the Pathways for the implementation phase of the Synod (29 June 2025).

Alongside the Final Document and the Pathways, the journey is also accompanied by the Final Reports of the Study Groups established by Pope Francis after the First Session of the Assembly, progressively published on the website [www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va). The General Secretariat of the Synod will also provide additional working materials and organize online formation meetings to support those responsible for the process in the local Churches. General Secretariat of the Synod

### Care For Creation -May 2026



Celebrating the Life and Work of David Attenborough 100 years old this month

There are few voices in the world as instantly recognisable, as calming, and as inspiring as that of Sir David Attenborough. For many of us, his gentle narration has been the soundtrack to moments of wonder—whether watching a bird take flight, a whale glide through the ocean, or a forest come alive with hidden beauty. But beyond the familiar voice lies a life devoted to something deeply meaningful: helping us see, understand, and cherish the natural world as a gift.

David Attenborough's work has always been about more than simply observing nature. It is about connection. Through his programmes, he invites us to pause and look more closely at creation—to notice the intricate patterns, the delicate balance, and the astonishing diversity of life on Earth. In doing so, he reminds us that we are not separate from the natural world, but very much a part of it.

For people of faith, this message resonates deeply. The natural world has long been seen as a reflection of divine creativity and care. The beauty of a sunrise, the rhythm of the seasons, and the richness of life all point to something greater than ourselves. Attenborough's storytelling helps us rediscover that sense of awe, encouraging us to see the world not as something to be taken for granted, but as something to be treasured and protected.

Over the years, his message has become increasingly urgent. Alongside the wonder, he has not shied away from speaking about the

challenges facing our planet—climate change, loss of biodiversity, and the impact of human activity. Yet even here, his tone remains hopeful rather than despairing. He reminds us that it is not too late to make a difference, and that each of us has a role to play in caring for the Earth.

This call to stewardship aligns closely with the values that we seek to uphold. Caring for creation is an expression of gratitude and responsibility. It is a way of honouring the world we have been entrusted with, ensuring that future generations can experience the same beauty and abundance that we enjoy today.

What makes David Attenborough's work so powerful is not only the knowledge he shares, but the spirit in which he shares it. There is humility in his approach, a sense of wonder that has never faded, even after decades of exploration. He does not position himself as someone who has all the answers, but as a fellow traveller, inviting us to learn and reflect alongside him.

As we celebrate his life and work, perhaps the greatest tribute we can offer is to take his message to heart. We can care for creation in our everyday choices, speak and act with hope about environmental challenges and campaign for change. In our conversations we can stand up for the Earth and for those most affected by environmental harm. And if the news seems overwhelming, then we can pray.

**Christine Parrott**

## World Day Of Prayer Hosted By Corpus Christi Parish



"As part of the Dearne Churches Together group

we host the annual World Day of Prayer service on a rotational basis. This group consists of the local Anglican, Methodist, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and Salvation Army communities.

This year it was the turn of Corpus Christi Parish (Sacred Heart Church Goldthorpe) to host the service, which was created by Christian women from Nigeria, with the theme 'Come, I will give you rest'. The stories of four Nigerian women were shared, emphasising Trust in God in the face of Insecurity, Marginalisation, Religious Persecution, Poverty and Despair.

We are blessed with a thriving parish community with many Nigerian members, and it was lovely to have them leading us in the Igbo praise song 'Kelaya Nobueze' - 'Give him thanks'. The service was attended by representatives from ten different local church communities, and over refreshments afterwards everyone spoke very warmly of the warmth of our welcome and what a wonderful, shared experience of praise and prayer the service had been.

We were delighted to host the service and are already looking forward to attending World Day of Prayer 2027 which will be hosted by our Methodist friends."

**Amanda Campbell**

## Our Lady and St Thomas Beauchief Abbey and Padley Chapel



The remains of Beauchief Abbey, from the site of the High Altar. A strong dedication to Our Lady links Beauchief Abbey and the shrine of Padley Chapel.

The 8th Antiphon 'O Virgin of Virgins how shall this be? For neither before thee was any like thee..' is sung on December 23rd, the Abbey's founding date in 1183.

Beauchief Abbey was of the Praemonstratensian order, founded by Saint Norbert. Members of the order are known as White Canons (white reflecting Our Lady's purity). 'Lady's Spring' wood is nearby.

In 1263, Matthew of Hathersage, granted land to Beauchief Abbey, eg Blacka Moor, Longshawe, Padley, North Lees and Ladybower.

The White Canons brought the celebration of Mass to their Grange Farm communities and supervised the operation of related industries eg lead mining, quarrying, forestry, milling and sheep farming. It is likely that the building remains at the west end of Padley chapel are from their Grange farm.

When Robert and Joan Eyre developed the manor site (post 1415), with their chapel in the gatehouse, they honoured Our Lady with the Virgin of Virgins, Rosa Mystica and St Thomas references in the building and in the Eyre embroideries' 'Theotokos' prayers (God Bearer or Mother of God).

The Rosary will have been prayed many times both at and on journeys between the two sites.

Let us join the White Canons in their tradition of saying this prayer when passing an image of Our Lady, 'For the sake of the love of thy Mother, spare us O Jesus'.

Padley Chapel Shrine is open Sundays (2.00 – 4.00 pm) until 4th October 2026.

If you would like to explore alternative visit times or join the Welcomers, or would like a copy of 'A Pilgrim's guide to Padley', (also available for sale on Sundays), please contact [friendsofpadley@hallamdiocese.com](mailto:friendsofpadley@hallamdiocese.com).

**Gerard Bonner**

**Call for debt justice with CAFOD, standing in solidarity with millions worldwide.**



Last year, our Catholic community supported a global church campaign to tackle the debt crisis, but we need continued support, to change the devastating impacts of debt on low-income countries. During the Jubilee Year, 35,000 people signed CAFOD's petition including 10 parishes in Hallam, let us build on this hope. Please see [cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt](https://cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt)

All countries borrow money. But low-income countries need to borrow more and are pushed into deepening debt crisis, paying high interest rates to wealthy lenders. Often, they have paid their original debt back, but spiralling interest means they cannot break the cycle. Money that should be spent on food, healthcare, and education is flowing out of countries that can least afford it. Governments across the global south must choose between serving their people or paying creditors.

Wesley Chibamba, Caritas Africa's Policy and Advocacy Officer, explained people are dying because they can't access healthcare. Children cannot go to school. People are going hungry because the governments have debt obligations. Governments don't have the capacity to respond to humanitarian crisis, like floods or drought – they don't have the funds.

Archbishop Gabriele GiordanoCaccia, says "The current debt crisis represents a profound failure of our global economic system...If a mother cannot access prenatal care because the government has cut healthcare spending to

service debt... if communities cannot rebuild after disasters because the resources are diverted to foreign creditors, we must acknowledge that there has not just been a serious economic failure but a moral one."

Next year, our government is hosting the G20 in 2027 - a crucial gathering of the world's 20 most powerful economies. These leaders have power to fix the global debt system; we need to call for debt justice now. Please sign CAFOD's new petition this spring and build on the momentum of 2025.

As Wesley Chibamba says, "It is not an issue of compassion, it is an issue of justice. If you care for humanity and development, we urge you to support the debt justice campaign.

**Angela Powell**

## Conversations on Catholic Teachings



The parish of St William of York in Sheffield introduced a new initiative in April 25 named 'Conversations on Catholic Teachings'.

In 2024, the Holy Church requested each and every catholic church to participate in the synodal discussions by reflecting on the journey of our catholic faith so far and where we go from here.

During these discussions, it was felt that the challenges in the understanding of the context and some of the aspects of the catholic teachings, were hugely contributory to our declining numbers of practising Catholics. On reflection, it was felt that there was limited opportunity to discuss about these aspects and

understand these teachings and the ongoing dialogue within the Catholic Church.

We felt that it was important to attempt to have these conversations as we recognise the importance of our faith in our lives and the aspiration of each and every human being for love, hope and peace which comes from God.

The first step was to acknowledge that we needed to have these conversations in a constructive and safe space to reflect on these teachings, try to understand them, discuss our thoughts and join the journey of our Church.

Our beloved Pope Francis, in his encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti', invited us to "dialogue among all people of good will". In his open-heartedness to all peoples, to all faiths, he taught us to see past differences.

As a result of a year's worth of discussions and reflections, we commenced our conversations in April 25. So far, we have had four sessions after Sunday Mass, for about an hour. The structure of each session includes prayers, Bible reading with reflection on the passage, discussion on a specific theme of Catholic teaching, the history behind the teaching, the church's journey with the decision making and following conversations and sharing of thoughts.

We listen and share compassionately deeply personal and profound thoughts with an aim to understand more and come closer to God. The topics that we have discussed so far include abortion, female priests, marriage and divorce and assisted dying. These sessions have been well received and about 15-20 individuals have attended each session.

As a parish community we hope to continue this journey and hope that others will be inspired too. The material used for these discussions is also available on the parish website. This includes the prayers, Bible reading, sources of information and ending prayer. We hope this will support future conversations in other parishes as well. In Pope Francis' words 'Life is a journey. When we stop, we don't go forward'.

**Tina Paul**

## An inspiration - Laudato Si



In May, a visit to the Laudato Si' Centre in Salford was organised by Christine and Richard Watts from St. William of York parish in Sheffield. They were joined by a small group from St. Vincent's parish 'Live Simply' group along with a CAFOD group from Newcastle under Lyme. Christine and Richard belong to the Lay Community of St. Benedict and about a dozen others from their community also attended. Nestled in the grounds of Wardley Hall (traditional base of the Bishops of Salford) the Centre embodies the spirit and practice of Pope Francis' encyclical

### *Laudato Si'*

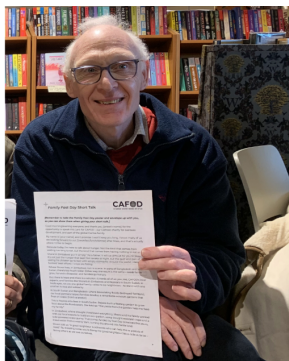
—a call to all people, regardless of faith, to embrace a lifestyle of sustainability, compassion, and reverence for our planet. Visiting the Centre proved to be a deeply inspiring journey into the heart of Pope Francis' vision for care for creation, ecological spirituality, and communal hope. The Centre's gardens, prayer walks, and eco-friendly initiatives invite reflection and action, making the teachings of *Laudato Si'* tangible and alive. The day was led by Emily who puts her heart and soul into her organising role at the Centre. The day started with meditation. We were given various herbs and invited to reflect on any memories or thoughts that the smells evoked. Whilst handling and examining some wildflowers it was easy to marvel at the wondrous mystery of creation in all its beauty. There followed a guided tour of some of the 85 acres on the site. In five years a previously lawned area had evolved into a glorious display of fruit trees, wildflower meadows, lavender

trails, herb and vegetable patches. A perfect example of the resilience and harmony of nature if left much to its own devices. We weren't there just to admire the gardens, we were there to appreciate and reflect on how everything is interconnected, and that life needs diversity to thrive. One of the main aims of the Centre is to reach out to marginalised groups offering programmes for refugees and asylum seekers, people with mental health and addiction problems and to offer horticultural therapy for all ages. Thousands have visited the Centre since it opened in 2019. The Centre works with schools, parishes, local food banks, and community groups. We heard powerful stories of how nature can calm troubled minds when support and kindness are given within this outdoor setting (including a fascinating link with the local Fire Service and its programme for those convicted of fire-setting crimes). Nature was used to create images (e.g. a willow dome is being grown which has the exact space within it that a tent has for a family of four in the Calais camps).

What sets this Centre apart is its commitment to integrating faith with environmental stewardship. Every resource and activity is designed to deepen one's connection to both God and creation. The Centre doesn't just talk about sustainability—it demonstrates it and lives it. There was only one structure that was bought for the site, everything else is re-purposed, re-used, recycled, nothing goes to waste. The atmosphere is one of hope and renewal fostering a sense of shared responsibility, a sense that protecting our common home is not just an environmental duty but a spiritual one.

For anyone seeking to align their values with meaningful action, the Laudato Si' Centre is a sanctuary of inspiration. It challenges us to see the world through a lens of integrity, dignity, and compassion—values at the core of Pope Francis' teachings. A visit here is more than a trip; it's an invitation to transform how we live, pray, and care for our shared planet.

## Community heroes celebrated during National Volunteers' Week



In June, community heroes from across the country are celebrated for their outstanding contributions in National Volunteers' Week. The annual event shines a spotlight on those who have made a positive impact locally and beyond, a chance for charities to express thanks. Michael Curry, from Our Lady of Perpetual Help and English Martyrs, Doncaster, is one of them, he reflects on his experience of volunteering for CAFOD. Michael writes...I've known about CAFOD'S work for many years. I was encouraged to volunteer after reading CAFOD's Lenten Reflections, which were shared by a parish priest. I love working for CAFOD, it gives me great pleasure and reward knowing we are helping other people in countries that have so few basic facilities to live. It's comforting to know the money we raise benefits others around the world to give them a better life. I like to think it was God that made me decide to become a volunteer. I have always had an inclination for helping people as it gives me so much reward and a sense of well-being. There is that satisfaction, and maybe I take after my mother (who recently passed away) as I feel deep down that there is some humanitarianism inside me. It is what God would expect me to do as that is part of being a Christian. Christine Allen, CAFOD Director and CEO, said: "We're incredibly fortunate to have volunteers across the country who put their faith into action to make our world a better place - through prayer, fundraising and campaigning for those who are suffering. We are so thankful them for their commitment and dedication, which is making a real difference in communities around the world." **Angela Powell**



You are warmly invited to our first meeting to meet our new Diocesan link for National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW).

*Judith Green,*

This gathering aims to help build a strong network of women across the Diocese of Hallam.!

Join us for conversations over cakes, coffee & tea with a moment to reflect in prayer



At Hallam Pastoral Centre

On 4<sup>th</sup> July 2026

from 10am-12pm

**NBCW**  
National Board of Catholic Women



Our Lady of Guadalupe Relic is visiting the Mother of God Church, Abbeydale Road on Saturday 6 June. The day begins at 10 am with Holy Mass followed veneration of the relic. This will be followed by a Rethink Abortion Day led by the March for Life team in the Parish Centre. The team will lead a series of engaging, inspiring and informative sessions aimed at motivating and equipping us to articulate our pro life beliefs. The booking fee for this event is being subsidised by the group. Please bring your own packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided. To book visit Rethink Abortion Interactive Training Day Tickets, Saturday, Jun 6 from 10 am to 4 pm on Eventbrite  
**Rachel Wood**

## World Youth Day Seoul with the Northern Dioceses

**WYD SEOUL 2027** Age 18+

**Northern Diocesan Partnership**  
**1st - 10th August 2027**  
**£2,995\***

*\* This approximate cost includes accommodation, transfers in Seoul, WYD package, excursions and return flights - all subject to confirmation of flight costs.*

For more information and to apply, please email:  
[youth@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:youth@hallam-diocese.com)

Diocese of Hallam

1-10 August 2027

The highlights of World Youth Day are the celebrations attended by Pope Leo, such as the Papal welcome of the pilgrims, the Way of the Cross, the vigil and, on the last day and the Closing Mass. Young people from all over the world will gather for moments of prayer, socializing and recreation together with a Youth Festival, Vocational Fair, and opportunities for Reconciliation in different parts of Seoul. More details from [youth@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:youth@hallam-diocese.com)

**Sue McDonald**



**CARMELITE FRIARS**  
 Friends of White Friars Oxford Fund

### CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRITUALITY SUMMIT 2026

Contemplative Creativity & Human Flourishing  
 10–11 July · Carmelite Priory, Oxford · Also online

Join thirteen international speakers — including Cardinal Anders Arborelius OCD, Dr Susan Muto, and Fr Iain Matthew OCD — for a two-day exploration of how contemplative wisdom can renew creativity and restore the human spirit. In person and online. Register here further details available on our website

## Retreats From the Ecological Conversion Group

**The Joy of Limits**  
 Day retreat  
 Saturday 6th June  
 London

*"Unless these things are appreciated artistically they are not appreciated at all."  
 G.K. Chesterton*

<https://tinyurl.com/joyoflimitsjune26>

### In-person day retreat: Joy of Limits

"Unless these things are appreciated artistically they are not appreciated at all." G.K. Chesterton  
 The retreat will be a day full of contemplation, talks, discussion, observational and imaginative drawing and sharing some simple food. There is no need to be an accomplished artist to enjoy the day, even those who think they can only draw a stickman will find a day of calm reflection and fellowship. "The Joy of Limits" is led by Sr MaryAnne Francalanza, a Faithful Companion of Jesus and director of the FCJ Centre for Spirituality and EcoJustice, and John Paul de Quay who is an illustrator and director of the Ecological Conversion Group charity. In case you missed us earlier this year, we are excited to offer a second opportunity to explore the materials from our debut 'Art of Limits' retreat held in February Location : FCJ Centre for Spirituality and EcoJustice, 32 Phoenix Road, Somers Town, London NW1 1TA Saturday 6th June In-person Day Retreat 10am-4pm (Optional Vigil Mass at 4:30pm) Further information and purchases tickets here: <https://tinyurl.com/JoyofLimitsjune26> further details available on our website.

### The School for Synodality Retreat

27 June 2026, held online and open to all those who wish to explore knowing ourselves 'beloved by God'. We invite you to rediscover the joy of your baptism, unpacking that gift with inspirational Catholic speaker David Wells, and a mixture of personal reflection and the opportunity to share prayerfully with others. Date: Saturday 27 June 2026 Time: 12 noon - 4pm Venue: On Zoom Register your attendance <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/schoolforsynodality/2179967> **Sorcha Connell**