

RECENTLY DIED

Please pray for the eternal repose of the following:

Mr Robert (Bob) Partridge R.I.P. – The Funeral was celebrated at Thornhill Crematorium on Thursday 21st October.

Mrs Betty Murphy R.I.P. – The Funeral Mass will be celebrated at St Mary's on Monday 25th October at 10.45am.

Mr James Hill R.I.P. – The Funeral Mass will be celebrated at St Mary's on Tuesday 26th October at 12pm.

Mrs Rose Philomena (Phyllis) Shannon R.I.P. – The Funeral Mass will be celebrated at St Mary's on Thursday 28th October at 11.30am.

Mrs Ann Marie Audriana Nicholls R.I.P. – The Funeral Mass will be celebrated at St Mary's on Friday 5th November at 12pm.

Mr Michael Oake R.I.P. – Funeral to be arranged.

Mr Peter Hoole R.I.P. – Funeral to be arranged.



**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light
shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen.
Amen.**

Pray for the Sick

Holy Family: Catherine Driscoll, Kay & Paul Parris, Bernard Perry, Mary Bodman, Valentine, Collette Griffin, Vivian Miller, Brian Webster, Henry Fernandez, Hanna Marengi, Susanna, Martin, Chris Collins, Joseph Stancombe, Zaid Saffo, Peter Macpherson.

St Mary's: Fr Christopher Delaney, Bethan Williams, Jean Allen, Madison Lane, Marian Lamb, Nadasiri Ifada, Cecily Hughes, James Church, Anthony Jackson, Tom Hopkins, Margaret Griffiths, Joanne Coakley, Helen Ward, Carina Foster, Ben Foster, Maria Sullivan, Mary D'Alpa, Patricia Sadka, Mary Williams, Donald Rees, Michael McLoughlin., Jacob Callaghan.

Readings continued Mark 10:46-52.

This encounter with the blind Bartimaeus is the last healing story of Mark's Gospel, coming just before Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as Messiah. Half way through Mark's Gospel we witness the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida, just before the declaration of Jesus as Messiah at Caesarea Philippi. Today we hear of how Jesus leaves Jericho so as to make his way to Jerusalem where his messiahship will be made manifest. This final stage of the great journey is marked by the healing of a blind man. Whereas the man who was healed at Bethsaida is instructed to go home and to keep his cure secret, here outside the walls of Jericho the man is allowed to follow Jesus along the road in anticipation of the final messianic manifestation. Bartimaeus, having been granted the gift of physical sight, must now accompany Jesus as a disciple so as to gain his spiritual sight. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, began to shout: "Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me." Then Jesus spoke: "What do you want me to do for you?" "Rabbuni, Master, let me see again." "Go; your faith has saved you." And immediately his sight returned and he followed Jesus along the road.

Parish Contacts

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Monsignor Canon John Maguire

Retired Priest in Residence at Holy Family

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Bank details for standing orders, which are directly linked to the respective parish accounts are as follows:

Account name: Archdiocese of Cardiff

Sort code: 20-18-23 (for both)

St Mary's Acc No: 03285375

Holy Family Acc No: 63656861

St Mary's SVP contact number 07731847622.

Parish Safeguarding Reps

Mrs Ellery Hennessy (Holy Family)

Mr Jack Meggitt-Phillips (St Mary of the Angels)

Primary Headteachers:

Holy Family

Mrs Louise Mills Tel: 20565354

St. Mary's

Miss Claire Russell Tel: 2022 5680

Secondary Headteachers:

Corpus Christi

Mr Patrick Brunnock Tel: 20761893

Mary Immaculate

Mr Huw Powell Tel: 2059 3465

St David's 6th Form College

Mr Mark Leighfield Tel: 20498555

CHANGE OF HOUR NEXT WEEK

Don't forget that the
clocks go back an
hour next weekend!



Holy Family & St Mary of the Angels

Keyston Rd, Fairwater CF5 3NP

Kings Rd, Canton CF11 9BX

24th - 31st October 2021 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time (Cycle B)

Readings for the 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 31:7-9.

Jeremiah writes at a time when the enemies of Israel are threatening the very gates Jerusalem and all seems lost. The prophet speaks of the promises made by the Lord and communicates his message with a real warmth. Having said this, his words do not constitute some empty reassurance. Jeremiah was a reluctant prophet who did not wish to embrace the responsibility of the appointment. He was acutely aware that the task being entrusted to him would cause him to become a most unpopular figure with his own people. He explicitly complains to God for putting him in such a situation but he is never truly disrespectful. Jeremiah acknowledges God to be his father and feels able to open his heart without reserve. By operating with openness before God, Jeremiah finds the strength to proclaim the challenging message. He offers warnings regarding impending disaster. It is not surprising that the voice of the prophet is rarely welcomed. As we listen to prophetic voices we all have to acknowledge that God acts according to a timescale of his own that is not dependent upon, and rarely coincides with, our expectations. "The Lord has saved his people, the remnant of Israel!" "They had left in tears, I will comfort them as I lead them back." "For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born son."

Psalms 125.

What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad.

Hebrews 5:1-6.

The high priests who served the rituals of the Covenant of Sinai were men amongst men, themselves sinners, who offered the temple sacrifices in expiation for their own sins and for the sins of the people. The Eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, was also a man who stood in the midst of the people, though he was without sin. In his humanity, Jesus shared with us the experience of ignorance and the limitations of uncertainty. Jesus was God made Flesh, but the omniscience of his divinity was not simply translated into his human mind. Jesus, boy and man, 'learned' through experience according to his humanity. If we are to understand the sincerity and magnitude of his sacrifice, we must recognise that Jesus did not act according to a humanly known assured outcome. Whilst Jesus had complete trust in his Heavenly Father, who called him to become the Eternal High Priest, this should not be interpreted in terms of Jesus being in possession of some pre-vision of his future vindication. Jesus 'learns' to take the path towards suffering willingly and wholeheartedly, without the comfort of reassurance. "Christ did not give himself the glory of becoming high priest, but he had it from the one who said to him: You are my son, today I have become your father." "You are a priest of the order of Melchizedek, now and for ever."

Alleluia. Alleluia!

I am the light of the world, says the Lord, anyone who follows me will have the light of life.

Alleluia!

Continued opposite

Holy Family Masses

Sunday: 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time (24th October)

6pm Vigil Mass Sharon Dobson (née Mullett) RIP

11am Repose of the Soul of Mr N K Joseph

Tuesday: (26th October)

9.30 Lauren Clifford (birthday)

Thursday: (28th October)

9.30am **Solemnity of All Saints (31st October)**

6pm Vigil Mass

11am Terry Donovan

St Mary's Masses

Sunday: 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time (24th Oct.)

World Mission Sunday

10am For the People of the Parishes

12pm Nilla Menezes

1.30pm Sacrament of Baptism

6pm Intentions for the Thomas Family

Monday: The Six Welsh Martyrs and their Companions (25th October)

9.30am Hayden Lane

10.45am Funeral Mass for Mrs Betty Murphy

Tuesday: Weekday in Ordinary Time (26th Oct.)

9.30am Collins Family Intention

12pm Funeral Mass for Mr James Hill

Wednesday: Weekday in Ordinary Time (27th Oct.)

9.30am John Foster

Thursday: St Simon and St Jude, Apostles (28th October)

11.30am Funeral Mass for Mrs Phyllis Shannon

7-8pm Adoration & Benediction

Friday: Weekday in Ordinary Time (29th Oct.)

9.30am Hayden Lane

Saturday: Weekday in Ordinary Time (30th Oct.)

Mass of Confirmation

(Intention for the Candidates)

Sunday: Solemnity of All Saints (31st October)

10am Stan & Frances Trigg

12pm Will Johnson (1st Anniversary)

6pm

Dependent upon my timetable, the Angelus and Prayer During the Day will be live-streamed at 12pm and Evening Prayer live-streamed at 7pm from Monday to Friday.

Confessions will be celebrated in children's liturgy room on Saturday from 10am to 11am. Access via the Church.

FEASTS OF THE WEEK

Monday 25th October – Feast: The Six Welsh Martyrs and their Companions.



The Six Welsh Martyrs and their Thirty-Four English Companions were Canonized by Pope St. Paul VI on the 25th October 1970.

St Richard Gwyn (+1584), St John Jones (+1598), St John Roberts (+1610), St Philip Evans (+1679), St John Lloyd (+1679), St David Lewis (+1679).

St John Houghton, St Richard Reynolds, St Augustine Webster, St Robert Lawrence, St John Stone, St Cuthbert Mayne, St Edmund Campion, St Ralph Sherwin, St Alexander Briant, St John Payne, St Luke Kirby, St Margaret Clitherow, St Margaret Ward, St Edmund Gennings, St Swithun Wells, St Polydore Plasden, St

Eustace White, St John Boste, St Robert Southwell, St Henry Walpole, St Philip Howard, St John Rigby, St Anne Line, St Nicholas Owen, St Thomas Garnet, St John Almond, St Edmund Arrowsmith, St Ambrose Barlow, St Alban Roe, St Henry Morse, St John Southworth, St John Plessington, St John Wall, St John Kemble.

Thursday 28th October – Feast: St Simon & St Jude, Apostles.

St Simon is given the epithets of Zealot or Canaanite /Canaanean. It is likely that Simon belonged to the Jewish sect called ‘The Zealots’, a Jewish sect that promulgated a strict interpretation of the Law – some members of this sect adopted a political as well as a religious resistance to Roman occupation and domination. Western tradition describes him as travelling to Egypt and Libya, before joining Jude (who had been working in Mesopotamia) on a mission to Persia. It is said that Simon suffered martyrdom at Sufian (Siani) in Persia.



Peter Paul Rubens, Saint Simon Zealot, 1611-1612



St Jude, also known as Thaddaeus, was a brother to St James the Less and therefore a cousin of Our Lord. One strand of tradition describes Jude as preaching the Gospel as far west as Libya, whilst another strand describes him as moving east as far as Mesopotamia. There is a Letter of St Jude contained within the Canon of the New Testament, addressed to Jewish converts in the Eastern regions of the Roman Empire. As stated above, a Western tradition places Jude in the company of Sim in Persia. Yet another ancient tradition describes Jude encountering martyrdom in Armenia. I'm sure you are all aware that St Jude is designated as the Patron of Lost Causes.

FORTHCOMING MEETING

There will be a joint meeting of the Holy Family Finance Committee and Parish Advisory Council on Tuesday 26th October at 7.00pm. Please note the change of time.

REFERENCE FOR CANDIDATES FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

*** N.B. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION MASS FOR ST MARY OF THE ANGELS WILL BE CELEBRATED ON SATURDAY 6TH NOVEMBER AT 2.00 PM.

*** N.B. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION MASS FOR HOLY FAMILY WILL BE CELEBRATED ON SATURDAY 13TH NOVEMBER AT 2.00 PM.



NOVEMBER DEAD LIST ENVELOPES – THE MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

*** NOVEMBER DEAD LIST ENVELOPES.

The month of November commences with the celebration of the Solemnity of All Saints followed by the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed. November also brings us to Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday when we commemorate the Fallen of the Wars. November is traditionally dedicated as a month of particular remembrance for all our departed relatives together with all the forgotten souls. The last of the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy is to bury the dead and the last of the Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy is to pray for the living and the dead. The November Dead List Envelopes will be available from this Sunday. Place your own personal list of the faithful departed in the envelope together with your stipend offering for return before the 1st November. A sequence of Masses will be offered during November for those named on the lists.

THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS 2023

Pope Francis has called ‘FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION.’

The process of consultation was meant to commence next Sunday, World Mission Sunday. Due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic over recent months, along with the vast majority of dioceses we will launch the consultation on the First Sunday of Advent. Reflections and submissions will be gathered by the end of February. It is hoped that the preliminary period of preparation would present two concrete actions that could be addressed between the beginning of Lent and the conclusion of Eastertide, the Solemnity of Pentecost. Let us consciously pray for the Universal Church and for our Archdiocesan Family as we embark on this journey. Let us pray that our two Parish Communities will respond fruitfully to the invitation set before us by the Holy Father.

REFERENCE FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES

*** N.B. THERE WILL BE A FINAL MEETING AND PRACTICE FOR ALL OUR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES ON WEDNESDAY 27TH OCTOBER FROM 6.30PM TO 7.30PM AT THE CHURCH OF ST MARY OF THE ANGELS.

*** N.B. THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY 30TH OCTOBER AT 2.00PM IN ST MARY OF THE ANGELS.

*** N.B. PLEASE PRAY FOR THE 22 CANDIDATES FROM BOTH PARISH COMMUNITIES WHO ARE PREPARING FOR THEIR RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION NEXT SATURDAY.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

A homily for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation

The Apostles, who had received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in fulfilment of the Lord's promise, had power to complete the work of Baptism by the giving of the Holy Spirit, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. When St Paul had laid his hands on certain people who had been baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

The Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, possess the same power and, either in their own right or through Priests lawfully appointed to fulfil this ministry, they confer the Holy Spirit on those who have already been born again in Baptism.

Even if today the coming of the Holy Spirit is no longer widely made manifest by the gift of tongues, we know by faith that the Spirit, through whom the love of God has been poured into our hearts and through whom we are gathered in unity of faith and in diversity of callings, is received by us and is working invisibly to make the Church holy and one.

Dearly beloved candidates, the gift of the Holy Spirit, which you are about to receive, will be a spiritual seal, by which you will be conformed to Christ and will be made more fully members of the Church. For Christ himself, anointed by the Holy Spirit in the baptism he received from John the Baptist, was sent forth for the work of his ministry, to pour out on the earth the fire of the same Spirit.

Therefore, you who are already baptized will now receive the power of his Spirit and be signed with the cross on your foreheads. And so, you must always bear witness to his Passion and Resurrection before the world, so that your manner of life, as the Apostle says, may be in every place the pleasing fragrance of Christ. His Mystical Body, which is the Church, the People of God, receives from him diverse graces, which the same Holy Spirit distributes to individuals for the building up of that Body in unity and love.

Be living members of this Church, therefore, and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seek to serve all people like Christ, who came not to be served but to serve. And now, before you receive the Spirit, call to mind the faith which you professed in Baptism or which your parents and godparents professed with the Church.

The Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Do you renounce Satan, and all his empty promises? I DO.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth? I DO.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father? I DO.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who today through the Sacrament of Confirmation is given to you in a special way just as he was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost? I DO.

Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? I DO.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

AMEN.



The Laying On of Hands

Dearly beloved, let us pray to God the almighty Father, for these, his adopted sons and daughters, already born again to eternal life in Baptism, that he will graciously pour out the Holy Spirit upon them to confirm them with abundant gifts, and through his anointing conform them more fully to Christ, the Son of God.

The Bishop then lays hands on the head of each Candidate

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who brought these your servants to ne birth by water and the Holy Spirit, freeing them from sin: send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete; give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety; fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Anointing with Chrism

The Bishop inscribes the Sign of the Cross with Sacred Chrism on the forehead of each candidate as he says:

(Using the chosen Confirmation name of each Candidate) N., BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Candidate replies: AMEN.

The Bishop adds: PEACE BE WITH YOU.

The Candidate replies: AND WITH YOUR SPIRIT.

FINANCE & PROPERTY

Parish Offertory Collection at St Mary's:

17th October - Gift aid £51.12 Loose £447.56

St Mary's Standing Orders per week amount to £600.00 of which 90% is gift aided.

Parish Offertory Collection at Holy Family:

17th October - Gift aid £190.00 Loose £289.80

Holy Family Standing Orders per week amount to £250.00 of which 95% is gift aided.

BANK DETAILS FOR STANDING ORDERS

Bank details for standing orders, which are directly linked to the respective parish accounts are as follows:

Account name: Archdiocese of Cardiff

Sort code: 20-18-23 (for both)

St Mary's Acc No: 03285375

Holy Family Acc No: 63656861

NEW ELECTRONIC DONATION STATION AT ST MARY'S

Our new electronic donation station is now operational at St Mary of the Angels. It is currently located within the entrance porch. The display screen offers clear instructions for use. You can make a donation securely either by the contactless method or by inserting your card and using your PIN.

BIBLE ALIVE NOVEMBER EDITION

The monthly 'Bible Alive' magazine provides daily meditations on the Gospel readings together with reflections on any feasts. Each edition also contains a few articles on spiritual themes. The cost is £3 per copy.

A NOTE FROM DEACON MAURICE ST VINCENT'S COMMUNITY CENTRE, ELY BRIDGE



I'm very pleased to report that the refurbishment and refitting of the former St Clare's Church is now complete with major financial support from the SVP and the Welsh Assembly via its Communities and Facilities Programme. Henceforth it will be known as St Vincent's Community Centre, Ely Bridge and the SVP have appointed a manager, Nathan Harding, who took up his new role a few weeks ago. There will be an official opening by Archbishop George at the end of November. We will hold a meeting of volunteers at St Vincent's in the near future to discuss things further. If you think you may be able to help in any way as a volunteer in this exciting new venture, please contact Deacon Maurice: mfscanlon@hotmail.co.uk or 07747038274

APPEAL FOR BAGS FOR LIFE

Reaching Out are asking for your assistance! They are in need of large, strong Bags for Life in order to deliver food parcels. Do you have any that are surplus to requirements? If so, would you please bring them to either church and they will be passed on to the appropriate person. Many thanks.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

*** OUR PARISHES, IN LINE WITH THE PATTERN EXPERIENCED IN ALL PARISHES ACROSS THE ARCHDIOCESE, HAVE EXPERIENCED A 40% LOSS OF INCOME OVER THE MONTHS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC IN THE SPRING OF 2020. DURING THE FIRST LOCK-DOWN, THE LOSS OF INCOME WAS IN THE REGION OF 70%. FOLLOWING FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH BOTH PARISH COUNCILS, I WILL SOON PRESENT A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF OUR FINANCIAL SITUATION, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT OF SOME ESSENTIAL WORKS AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS.

HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL TWITTER ACCOUNT

Holy Family School now have a Twitter account. All Classes will Tweet regularly, sharing examples of learning experiences.

Please follow us and retweet.

Our account is: HolyFamilyCardiff @HolyFam Cardiff- or just search for Holy Family Cardiff on Twitter.



Harvest Celebration at Holy Family School

On Thursday afternoon the Foundation Phase celebrated Harvest with a fantastic performance of 'The enormous Turnip', the singing and dancing was great. A joyful end to a very busy half term!!! The families of Holy Family school donated lots of food. This was collected yesterday by the Parish 'Reaching Out' Team.



DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING

Please remember that you can put your name down for training whether you are a parishioner of Holy Family or St Mary's. We are in the process of arranging training in November with a parishioner who is qualified to deliver such training. Contact canton@rcadc.org.

Archdiocese of Cardiff "The God Who Speaks": Scripture Study Day

The next Scripture Study Day will be given on Saturday, November 6th from 11am-12.30pm. **On November 6th, Deacon Philip Manghan will be giving a talk on "The Gospel of St. Luke"**. Deacon Philip hails from St. Mary's Bridgend. He will be familiar to many people for his knowledge of the Scriptures and his friendly and engaging speaking style. He will bring our study of the four Gospels to an excellent end. Details of the programme of talks for the year can be found on the Archdiocesan website [https://rcadc.org/ events](https://rcadc.org/events).

You can access the talks on the day via Zoom at: <http://tinyurl.com/RCADCscripture>

Meeting ID 863 9669 5727

Passcode: 068790

Contacts for enquiries: Madeleine Walters
at madeleine.walters@rcadc.org
or Kate Duffin at kate.duffin@hotmail.co.uk

SUNDAY 24TH OCTOBER - WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

*** RETIRING COLLECTION THIS WEEK IN SUPPORT OF
WORLD EVANGELIZATION

World Mission Sunday is being celebrated in every Catholic parish around the world today. Today's focus helps us all to support missionaries who work alongside communities that are poor or face some particular need, regardless of their background or belief. By supporting MISSIO, the Pope's charity for world mission, you will help missionaries like Sister Veronica build peace in Nigeria and share the love of Christ with those most in need. Please pray for the mission of the Church throughout the world and give what you can to this important collection which will sustain the future of the Church. Please call 020 7821 9755 (office hours) or visit Missio's website to donate a single gift / to set up a Standing Order / and to Gift Aid your donation if possible – missio.org.uk

This year's focus is BUILDING PEACE IN NIGERIA. Nigeria has a substantial Catholic minority population. In the north of Nigeria there is a sustained violent campaign of persecution.

We are asked to reflect upon Acts 4:20 – "We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard."

Intense violence continues to rock communities in Nigeria, with fatalities, mutilations, and destruction of property devastatingly commonplace. The violence is essentially caused by poverty, and historical religious tension is easily manipulated to encourage division and mistrust.

The Women's Interfaith Council encourages women of different faiths to work together to build peace through training programmes. These programmes empower women and contribute to healing and reconciliation in their communities. Rachel and her daughter, who are pictured on the front of the donation envelopes together with Sister Veronica, were attacked in their village and Rachel's son was killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen.

Today, with the support of Sister Veronica and the Women's Interfaith Council, Rachel is rebuilding her life and attempting to heal through forgiveness. She says: "When thinking about those who killed my son, if they are still alive, I pray for them – may God forgive them because they don't know what they have done."

Sister Veronica has been leading the Council since 2019. She says: "When you train a woman, you train a nation. We bring them together as women and build peace. Every religion talks about love, there is no religion that talks about war."

Let us assist Sister Veronica, and the many missionaries like her across the world, in continuing to share the joy of God's love and peace.

COP 26 GLASGOW – THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Bishops' Conference, through CAFOD (our national Catholic agency for overseas development), are asking that we pray for the leaders who will soon gather in Glasgow for COP 26. We are asked to pray for the most positive outcomes on behalf of the people of our planet who are most at risk from the devastating effects of major climate change.

In his Encyclical Letter 'Laudato Si' (*14), Pope Francis states the following: "I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affects us all."

COP 26 is the United Nations climate change conference being held in Glasgow between the 31st October and the 12th November. It will be attended by leaders from over 200 countries to discuss climate change and how to tackle the global ecological crisis. The conference follows on from a series of summits, including the Paris climate talks in 2015, where countries pledged to work together to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees centigrade (i.e. above pre-industrial levels). If we exceed this threshold, millions of the most vulnerable people in our communities at home and abroad will be at risk of the devastating effects of climate change.

For more information visit: cafod.org.uk/cop26

A Prayer for the COP 26 Climate Talks.

Loving God, we praise your name with all you have created. You are present in the fabric of the whole universe, and in the smallest of creatures. We acknowledge the responsibilities you have placed upon us as stewards of creation. May the Holy Spirit inspire all political leaders at COP 26 as they seek to embrace the changes needed to foster a more sustainable society. Instil in them (and in us) the courage and gentleness to implement fairer solutions for the poorest and most vulnerable, and to commit their nations to the care of OUR COMMON HOME. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

A LETTER FROM BISHOP JOHN SHERRINGTON TO FELLOW BISHOPS REGARDING THE DANGERS POSED BY BARONESS MEACHER'S 'ASSISTED DYING BILL 2021'

Bishop Sherrington is an Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Westminster and is a Moral Theologian. In the next few weeks, we face an unprecedented attack on the sanctity of life with Baroness Meacher's 'Assisted Dying Bill 2021' which received its First Reading in the House of Lords and is due its Second Reading with full debate on Friday 22nd October. The term 'Assisted Dying' is euphemistic, the truth is that the bill seeks to introduce Assisted Suicide. If legalised, this Bill would allow a terminally adult, with less than six months to live, to be assisted in committing suicide.

The context of the debate is fundamentally different from the Marris Bill in 2015. Dignity in Dying are running a vigorous campaign, which is highly mobilised. They have some national papers on side and are using strong, personal and emotional narratives to win hearts and minds. They also have a high presence on social media and are encouraging their supporters to write to Peers. Those in favour of the Bill are using language to confuse the issue and call it a compassionate and caring approach to obscure the actual reality and consequences of such legislation. As Pope Francis has said, 'Physician-assisted suicide is part of a "throwaway culture" that offers a "false compassion" and treats a human person as a problem ... True compassion does not marginalize anyone, nor does it humiliate and exclude – much less considers the disappearance of a person as a good thing.' He criticised 'those who hide behind an alleged compassion to justify and approve the death of a patient.'

We continue to argue for good palliative care and its important values, including spiritual ones, which are part of this approach. However, this language is being manipulated by Dignity in Dying. Importantly, at this stage we need to argue the dangers of the introduction of Assisted Suicide, which includes the safety of people who are vulnerable due to external pressures, and later liberalisation of the law which is evidenced by other countries which have introduced Assisted Suicide. Many voices from the world of disability-rights and other allies are also very fearful and fighting this bill. The Bill would also fundamentally change the relationship between the Healthcare Professionals and the Patient from treatment and care to providing the lethal means to commit suicide.

It is possible that the Bill will pass to Committee Stage without a vote in October and be returned to the Lords for Third Reading and then, if passed, be sent to the Commons. There will be pressure on the Government to provide time for this.

To prepare for these events, I ask your engagement and that of your dioceses over these next weeks. First, to ask you to call people to pray that the Bill will be defeated. Second, to ask that people write to the Peers from their personal experience and share stories which will argue the reasons for opposing the Bill as well as narrate the importance of precious time during the final stages of life. Healthcare and legal professionals should write giving reasons why they oppose the Bill. Peers engage with personal correspondence and not to campaigns. Third, to ask parishioners to engage and share stories and reasons against the Bill on social media.

In this way, the Church will be a prophetic voice: a voice of clarity and truth amidst the great confusion around this bill.

As I write the text of this week's newsletter, we are praying for this proposed legislation to fail at its second reading in the House of Lords. I still believe it would be beneficial for parishioners to contact individual peers, to hopefully express their opposition to any proposal to legalise assisted suicide. As previously indicated in the advice received from the Bishops' Conference, such correspondence will have a greater impact if it communicates personal experience of the moral issues that are at stake.

BRIEFING.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH REMAINS OPPOSED TO ANY FORM OF ASSISTED SUICIDE. IT IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMAN LIFE, AND WE CANNOT DIRECTLY CHOOSE TO TAKE THE LIFE OF ANOTHER, EVEN IF THEY REQUEST IT.

We must scrutinise and continue to challenge this proposed legislation in the months ahead. We must reaffirm our support for high quality end-of-life care, which includes spiritual and pastoral support for the one who is dying and their family.



SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THE PROPHETIC VOICE OF POPE ST JOHN PAUL II THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE DEBATE ON ASSISTED SUICIDE

PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE. Such proposed legislation arrives at a time when we have a growing elderly population, persistent exclusion and inequality for disabled people and a very real health and social care crisis. Experience during the pandemic is also pertinent, especially the number of care home deaths and the use or ‘misuse’ of ‘Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation’ notices for elderly and disabled people. This context coupled with the textual vagueness of the Bill raises a number of serious questions about law and society’s ability to protect the most vulnerable. How can the law ensure that a person is free from pressure from ending their life prematurely due to societal attitudes and perceptions about ‘quality’ or ‘worth’ of life? How can the law ensure a person is acting voluntarily and not out of a sense of ‘being a burden’ to family, to health and social care services and to society?

THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER COUNTRIES. Oregon, Belgium, Canada and other jurisdictions are held up as examples as to why the U.K. should follow suit in legalising assisted suicide. Yet, evidence in these countries overwhelmingly indicates that the introduction of laws for a ‘small number of cases’ inevitably leads to exponential growth in those seeking ‘assisted dying’: Oregon has seen a 1075% increase in ‘assisted deaths’ between 1998 and 2019, Belgium has seen a 925% increase between 2002 and 2019 and Canada has seen a 648% increase between 2016 and 2020. Similarly, an expansion of grounds upon which ‘assisted suicide’ is permitted follows suit with its legislation. Laws have been expanded in some jurisdictions to include assisted suicide for children, non-terminal illness (including non-terminal psychiatric illness). Laws are also being challenged with regards to allowing the elderly to request assisted suicide when their life is ‘complete’ or if they have dementia. Evidence shows that liberalisation of these laws seems to always follow. This is a serious risk, and can we expect the situation in the U.K. to be any different?

INVESTING IN CARE AND NOT ENDING CARE. Faced with suffering and illness, our response should be one of true compassion. This finds expression in high-quality and holistic end of life care for the one who is dying and their family. Rather than assisting suicide and bringing care and life to an end, we should be working to ensure people have access to the best end-of-life care when they need it. Organisations and medical professionals have done much good work in debunking myths and popular perceptions around end-of-life care and what a ‘good death’ can and does look like, but there is much more to be done here. The provision of quality palliative care should be a priority and reality for all who have need of it. ‘Assisted Dying’ could be seen as a quick and cheap alternative to proper end-of-life care. Can we expect a full range of choice to be given to us, in the event of terminal illness, should this Bill make the statute books? It is interesting to note that those who work most closely with people at the end of their lives are often those most opposed to assisted suicide within the medical profession.

RESOURCES.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/life-issues/>
In July 2021, the Bishops’ Conference Department of Social Justice hosted a webinar with Baroness Ilora Finlay of Llandaf and Robert Preston, which provided a very useful and rational guide to this complex and sensitive issue: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/a-rational-guide-to-the-assisted-suicide-debate/>

If you would like a FREE copy of the book entitled ‘Death By Appointment: A Rational Guide to the Assisted Dying Debate’ by Baroness Ilora Finlay and Robert Preston, please contact Collette McGovern at the Conference Secretariat. The book provides an excellent evidence-based approach to the issue: collette.mcgovern@cbcew.org.uk

‘The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dying Well’ promotes access to excellent care at the end of life and stands against the legalisation of assisted suicide. Their website provides up to date political news and resources on the issue: <https://www.dyingwell.co.uk/>

‘Living and Dying Well’ provides excellent information on research and analysis of the evidence surrounding the ‘assisted dying’ debate: <https://livinganddyingwell.org.uk/>

‘The Art of Dying Well’ hosts a variety of resources for helping people to think about death and dying: <https://www.artofdyingwell.org/>

Throughout his pontificate St John Paul II spoke with a prophetic voice on many subjects that affect the human condition. Among his many great encyclical letters is ‘Evangelium Vitae’ (The Gospel of Life), written in 1995. I offer just a few quotations from this text.

“The Gospel of Life is at the heart of Jesus’ message. Lovingly received day after day by the Church, it is to be preached with dauntless fidelity as ‘good news’ to the people of every age and culture.”

“One of the specific characteristics of present-day attacks on human life consists in the trend to demand a legal justification for them, as if they were rights which the State, at least under certain conditions, must acknowledge as belonging to citizens. Consequently, there is a tendency to claim that it should be possible to exercise these rights with the safe and free assistance of doctors and medical personnel.”

“A radical view goes so far as to maintain that in a modern and pluralistic society people should be allowed complete freedom to dispose of their own lives as well as the lives of the unborn: it is asserted that it is not the task of the law to choose between different moral opinions, and still less can the law claim to impose one particular opinion to the detriment of others.”

“... we have what appear to be two diametrically opposed tendencies. On the one hand, individuals claim for themselves in the moral sphere the most complete freedom of choice and demand that the State should not adopt or impose any ethical position but limit itself to guaranteeing maximum space for the freedom of each individual, with the sole limitation of not infringing on the freedom and rights of any other citizen. On the other hand, it is held that, in the exercise of public and professional duties, respect for other people’s freedom of choice requires that each one should set aside his or her own convictions in order to satisfy the demand of the citizens which is recognised and guaranteed by law; in carrying out one’s duties the only moral criterion should be what is laid down by the law itself. Individual responsibility is thus turned over to the civil law, with a renouncing of personal conscience, at least in the public sphere.”

“At the basis of all these tendencies lies the ethical relativism which characterizes much of present-day culture. There are those who consider such relativism an essential condition of democracy, inasmuch as it alone is held to guarantee tolerance, mutual respect between people and acceptance of the decisions of the majority, whereas moral norms considered to be objective and binding are held to lead to authoritarianism and intolerance. But it is precisely the issue of respect for life which shows what misunderstandings and contradictions, accompanied by terrible practical consequences, are concealed in this position.”

“The Gospel of Life is for the whole of human society. To be actively pro-life is to contribute to the renewal of society through the promotion of the common good. It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop. A society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalised. Only respect for life can be the foundation and guarantee of the most precious and essential goods of society, such as democracy and peace. There can be no true democracy without a recognition of every person’s dignity and without respect for his or her rights.”