

## **Pope at Angelus: Love opens paths for peace, never suffocating others**

At the Angelus prayer on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Pope Francis recalls that love should be filled with kindness and respect, never seeking to dominate those we love.

*In his reflection* ahead of the Marian prayer, the Pope encouraged Christians to place the New Year under the “caring gaze” of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He noted that the day’s Gospel reading depicts Mary as remaining “in a silence filled with wonder and adoration for the marvels that God is performing,” as the shepherds come to worship her Son, Jesus.

Mary, said the Pope, “makes room within herself for the One who is born. In silence and adoration, she places Jesus at the center and bears witness to Him as the Savior.”

### **Cathedral of silence**

Pope Francis pointed out that Mary, as a good mother, never sought to take the place of her Son, but became the first “cathedral of silence”, a place where God and man can meet.

Our mothers, too, he added, “bring us into the world and then continue to follow our development, often unnoticed, so that we can grow.”

“Let us remember this,” he said. “Love never suffocates; love makes space for the other and allows them to grow.”

### **Healthy love never overpowers others**

As the new year dawns, the Holy Father invited everyone to look to Mary and our own mothers “with grateful hearts”.

“Let us think about and also look to mothers,” he said, “to learn that

love which is cultivated especially in silence, that knows how to make space for the other, respecting their dignity, allowing the freedom to express themselves, rejecting all forms of possession, domination, and violence.”

The Pope noted that his message for the 57th World Day of Peace recalls that temptation of humanity to break peaceful coexistence due to a thirst for power and lust for profit.

“Love, on the other hand, is made of respect and kindness,” he said. “In this way, it breaks down barriers and helps to live fraternal relationships, to build societies that are more just and humane, and more peaceful.”

#### **Discreet, life-giving love**

In conclusion, Pope Francis prayed that Mary, the Mother of God, might help us to grow in love that gives life to others.

“May Mother of God and our Mother, in the new year, help us to grow in this gentle, silent, and discreet love that generates life, and open paths in the world for peace and reconciliation.”



## **CAFOD Lent Fast Day** **Friday, 23 February**

At the time of writing, Christmas is still a close memory, and talking about Lent seems premature, but the **CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day** is only just over a month away!

This Lent, **CAFOD**, would like to draw your attention to one of the many examples of the work they are able to facilitate, thanks to the generosity of parishioners like those at St. Stanislaus and Sacred Heart.

This is the story of James, a fisherman in New Kru Town, a coastal suburb of Monrovia, Liberia. For James in Liberia, landing a catch and staying safe at sea is as much a challenge as it was for James, the apostle, and the other fishermen in Jesus' time. In Liberia, several fishermen per month were losing their lives in storms, and without the right tools and safety equipment, getting a catch to feed wives and children was very difficult, and often the fishermen returned home empty-handed. Life jackets, compasses and other equipment were too expensive, and even skilled fishermen were unable to overcome the hazards.

Fortunately, **CAFOD** has been able to provide compasses, life jackets and GPS tracking systems, so that James and the other fishermen in his community can fish more safely and find good fishing spots. Also, they have a way of storing the fish they catch, so they bring home more fish and can sell some of it.

On Friday, 23 February, we are asked to eat simply and to consider giving anything we save to **CAFOD's** collection to enable more work like this to be done. It will be good to think that James and other communities like his will have a more certain future.

Again this year, **CAFOD** is setting a 'Big Lent Walk' challenge where participants walk 200km in 40 days. The idea is to walk when and where you choose over 40 days, alone or with friends, and getting sponsorship to raise money to help people as they overcome poverty.

Please pray for the people helped by **CAFOD** and especially for those who are still waiting for help to arrive.

The usual **CAFOD** envelopes will be available at the back of church, and donations can also be made online at [cafod.org.uk/lent](https://cafod.org.uk/lent).

With many thanks, as always

Nora Maw

To see the Mass live-streamed from Sacred Heart,  
access the streaming service through the parish website  
(on the Home Page, at 'Live Daily Mass')

Or go directly to:

<https://www.churchservices.tv/minehead>

All the Masses from Sacred Heart are live-streamed (only)

## West Somerset Food Cupboard January 2024

Dear friends and supporters of the West Somerset Food Cupboard,

**December was incredible!** The generosity of so many community groups (including Rotary and Lions), Magna, churches, shops and individuals, was heartwarming to say the least, and meant we were able to get 125 standard food parcels plus 120 Christmas treat bags, each with a hand-made Christmas label, out to all who needed them throughout December. We've tried to highlight at least some of the group contributions on our [/WSfoodcupboard Facebook page](#); please do have a look. A few are pictured here. Please accept our thanks if you contributed in any way.

**Sadly, the need doesn't stop** after the festive period and, for the next few months at least, is likely to grow, so if you'd like to continue to support the West Somerset Food Cupboard as we endeavour to ensure that no-one in our community goes hungry, here are some ways that you can help:

1. **Please donate non-perishable food** packets, tins, cartons and jars of food via any of our [community collection points](#). The items that we are currently running low on are listed here...

The supermarkets all display the current list (updated every month), and yes it is on the door on the way into Tesco, not just on the way out!

- ✓ **Tinned cold meat**
- ✓ **Small bottles squash**
- ✓ **Small jars coffee**
- ✓ **Hot chocolate**
- ✓ **UHT milk**
- ✓ **Tinned veg/potatoes**

2. **Please donate money** if you are able. Find out about regular giving online here: [Donating to WSFC](#)
3. **Please spread the word** about the [West Somerset Food Cupboard](#) so that people who need help can get it and people who can offer help know how.
4. **PLEASE AVOID DONATING:**
  - *anything other than food (we can't take your unwanted Christmas presents, but thank you)*
  - *your leftover Christmas puddings and mince pies!*
  - *anything that needs to be kept chilled or frozen*
  - *anything with less than 3 months until its Best Before Date*
  - *anything that has been opened/used (you'd be surprised!)*
  - *tins of lentils or other pulses/legumes (Controversial? Happy to explain if you send a message.)*
  - *anything homemade*
  - *alcoholic drinks or medication*

**The Tuesday Pantry** team have taken a well-earned two-week break over Christmas, but supplies were plentiful in the lead up, so everyone was happy. We continue to run this project at capacity and with a long waiting list. We do accept, and are grateful for, donations of fresh, frozen and sometimes homemade produce for the Tuesday Pantry, but *only by prior arrangement* as we have to consider safe preparation, storage and stock turnover, so please call us first. Thank you for your understanding.

**Throughout 2023 the Tuesday Pantry has provided 40 households per week with two bags of groceries (for £3.50), totalling 4000 bags of food. And the Emergency Food provision has supplied 1560 free bags of store cupboard basics (as compared with 1445 in 2022). So, a total of 5560 bags of food have been distributed in the area by the charity in the past 12 months. Your support is very much appreciated as we continue to try to meet the need in 2024.**

With best wishes from the West Somerset Food Cupboard team

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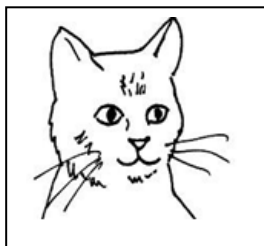
## **MORE THOUGHTS FROM MY DESK ON NORTH HILL MINEHEAD**

Are we really about to start the 40 days of Lent on 14<sup>th</sup> February. No *Mardi Gras* carnival as on the continent where it goes on for about a week, with floats to remind us that it will be a time to prepare for the great feast of Easter. Here just some pancakes with sugar and lemon. Never the less we will know that Lent has begun. In no time at all it will be 31<sup>st</sup> March and Easter Sunday. Let us see if we can make it a time to renew our commitment to our believes and really understand what this is all about. We are not just reading the words in our prayer books, but seeing the deeper meaning. Not just rattling off the much used prayers, but taking them slower and trying not to have our thoughts on other more mundane matters. It is so easy to go into flights of fancy and find that you are saying Amen, the prayer is finished and you realise that the words were just words. Words that you have said hundred of times and the meaning lost. Do not get hung up on the printed word. Remember praying is just talking to God. So put down the book and talk to God from your heart, then silence, clear your mind and listen.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, is urging us to pray for Peace. The more we see what is happening in the Middle East. It is a big ask. If we all want Peace, then Peace will happen. There is so much hatred going on, so much that the Holy Land was off limits to the worshippers at Christmas time. How sad. Maybe by the end of March, things will have got safer and Holy Week will be possible in the Holy Land again. Gaza will be sorted out and the hostages return to their homes. That will be a start. We must think positive thoughts. The killings cannot continue for ever. Peace will reign. The world cannot go on like this. Love your neighbour.

Michael Hankin

## West Somerset Pets: Letter from Ginger



Dear Evie, Brie and Everyone,

I was glad to learn about your activities over Christmas, Brie. You do lead a busy life. And we all thought of you, Evie, on your birthday Christmas Eve!

I too have been busy – the other day I averted a terrible threat to the household. The threat was posed by a dangerous rubber band, which I found on the floor in the hall. No-one else had even noticed it (devious blighters, rubber bands) but *I* did; and I acted! I apprehended the intruder and attacked it, bringing it into submission. This took some doing, I can tell you. It kept pinging away from me and shooting off across the floor. But I overcame it, and slew it. Then I called the family to come and see me standing guard over my vanquished opponent. They were impressed and grateful, telling me I was the saviour of the household and ought to get a New Year's Honour for Services to the Safety of Humankind. I detected a little sarcasm, but I could see they were pleased with me. They immediately gave me one of my favourite new treats which is called a Schleck-Snack and consists of lovely creamy yoghurtty stuff. I had the woman send examples of this wondrous treat to my colleagues who are cats in London, at Christmas time. Now they too enjoy these treats and spend hours per day searching for rubber bands and other foes to quell in order to earn a Schleck-Snack as a reward.

My humans, unlike me, are far from busy – they lie abed until ever so late in the mornings and have objected to my awakening them at the perfectly reasonable hour of 3am to demand my breakfast. By 3am it is usually a good 8 hours since my previous meal was served, so no wonder I am starving by then. But they make me wait HOURS, weak with malnutrition and suffering terrible pangs of hunger, until finally they deign to rise. Naturally I ensure that the woman's first task of the day is to replenish my food bowl.

In the evenings when they all have their meal, I sit on the bench next to the woman at the table – they all find this charming and think I am just there to enjoy their company. But in fact I am there to inspect their plates and see if there's anything I want to eat on them. If there is (and often

that's the case, because they indulge themselves greedily every day) the woman feeds me a few morsels of whatever delicacy they are having that day, offering them to me on her fingertip. I must say I find this by far the most acceptable way of eating and I would much prefer all my food to be proffered to me morsel by morsel on a human's fingertip.

Keep safe, my friends, and I wish you many treats.

All the best,

Ginger

## **BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

Next session: Wed. February 7<sup>th</sup> at 10.00 am,  
at 7, Hayman Road, Minehead TA24 5PA.

Following, or possibly preceded by, coffee,  
the subject text will be: Luke 2<sup>25</sup>- 4<sup>13</sup>.

All welcome.



## **Dulverton Town Hall**

**Friday 2 February**

**THE GREAT ESCAPER**

**Director: Oliver Parker**

**(Cert 12A)**

**96 mins**

An absolutely beautiful film about the thrilling true story of Bernard Jordan, a veteran who travelled alone to the beaches of Normandy in order to pay respects to his fallen comrades. He meets some fellow veterans on his way, and unknowingly becomes a news icon.

**Friday 16 February**

**INDIANA JONES AND THE DIAL OF DESTINY**

**Director: James Mangold**

**(Cert 12A)**

**154 mins**

Finding himself in a new era, approaching retirement, Indiana Jones wrestles with fitting into a world that seems to have outgrown him. But



as the tentacles of an all-too-familiar evil return in the form of an old rival, Indy must don his hat and pick up his whip once more to make sure an ancient and powerful artifact doesn't fall into the wrong hands.

**Friday 1 March**

**SCRAPPER**

**Director: Charlotte Regan**

**(Cert 12A)**

**84 mins**

Living alone in her London flat, 12-year-old Georgie must confront reality when her estranged father, Jason, shows up out of nowhere. Uninterested in a sudden new parental figure, she remains stubbornly resistant to his efforts. As they both adjust to their new circumstances, Georgie and Jason soon find that they still have a lot of growing up to do.

Tickets - Dulverton Films members £3, non-members £5, students, accompanied by an adult, £2.50. Book in advance at Dulverton Post Office (Tel: 01398 323474) or email [janaross2003@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janaross2003@yahoo.co.uk) . Bar open from 7pm.

## **ST STANISLAUS & SACRED HEART PARISHES**



**Please remember the following in your prayers, they are the sick and housebound of the two parishes and those we are asked to pray for:**

*Fred Keen; Tessa Wilson; Ann Knox; Willow Beckett; Jean Forsythe; Desmond Harrington-Spier; Linda Beckett; Pauline Woods; Diana Beckett, Pam Solly; Laura Webber; Graham Austin; Peter Bird; Julia; Sarah Angus.*

*Please remember all expectant mothers, armed forces personnel injured on duty, and members of the parishes who are housebound and/or ill and their families and carers.*

***Please also pray for the clergy of the Diocese especially those who may be sick. Remember Fr. Michael Derrick D'Mello and Fr Robert Miller, and all the retired Clergy.***

### **Sacred Heart Reader's Rota –Vigil Mass 5 pm**

27 January 2024	Pia Staniland & Morris Hopkins
3 February 2024	Paul and Edita Knight
10 February 2024	Rosemary Woods
17 February 2024	Pat Hancock
24 February 2024	Mary Reeve
2 March 2024	Hilary and Peter Roberts

### **Sacred Heart Reader's Rota – Sunday Mass 11.15 am**

28 January 2024	Tim Griffin
4 February 2024	Robin Adeney
11 February 2024	Barbara Wright
18 February 2024	James Bunch
25 February 2024	Melissa Cuevas
3 March 2024	Tim Griffin

## **WEATHER**

It has been found the world average temperature for 2023 is now an all time high since records began! Also, the winter rain in England is the lowest on record. (Despite the floods - most of them in January)

Having got used to a mild winter - the middle weeks of December with temperatures of 14°C and on December 18<sup>th</sup> -15°C. On the 18th January some of us had a frost with -10°C.

Weather records for December 2023:-

Maximum temperature was 15°C on the 18<sup>th</sup>;

Minimum temperature was -3°C on the 3<sup>rd</sup>;

Maximum pressure 30.2 inches;

Minimum pressure 29.25 inches;

A frost on the 3rd.

The total rain was 60 mm. You expected more but many days it was light rain or drizzle.

Nature notes. The birds are in need of any food please can you put out in the bad weather. The squirrel is stealing the Peanuts from our feeders. Have you done the “Garden Bird Count” please (<https://www.rspb.org.uk>)

Some crows (watch those in the trees at the west end of Dunster Beach) started to build/refresh their nests until the frosts came. There is a good showing of “Old Man's Beard” (what are other country names?). Please send them in.

Astronomical notes: You may look for these planets in February: Venus after dark, Mars after 7:20pm, Saturn may be seen near the moon in the middle of Feb.

Also, it's Candlemas on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February as well as the Groundhog Day (from the C16) also known as "Badger Day" (Please send in other names) it is at the last quarter Moon.

## **What Is Candlemas and Why Should We Celebrate It?**

February 2, Catholics mark the presentation of Christ in the temple. But not all Catholics are aware of the cultural origins of this feast.

According to the Mosaic law, a mother such as Mary who had given birth to a male child was considered unclean for seven days; moreover, she was to remain “in the blood of her purification”—i.e., outside the temple—for thirty-three days more. If the woman had borne a daughter, the time that she was excluded from the sanctuary was doubled.

When the time (forty or eighty days) was over, the mother was to “bring to the temple a lamb for a holocaust and a young pigeon or turtle dove for sin”; if she was not able to offer a lamb, she was to take two turtle doves or two pigeons; the priest prayed for her and so she was cleansed (see Leviticus 12:2-8).

Forty days after the birth of Christ, Mary complied with this precept of the law. She redeemed her first-born from the temple and was purified by the prayer of Simeon the just in the presence of Anna the prophetess (see Luke 2:22).

### **Early celebrations**

No doubt this event, the first solemn introduction of Christ into the house of God, was celebrated in the early Church in Jerusalem. We find it attested to in the first half of the fourth century by the pilgrim of Bordeaux, Egeria or Silvia. The day—February 14—was solemnly kept by a procession to the Constantinian basilica of the Resurrection and Mass that included a homily on Luke 2:22.

At that time, the feast had no proper name; it was simply called the fortieth day after Epiphany. This latter circumstance shows that, in Jerusalem, Epiphany was when the feast of Christ's birth was celebrated. From Jerusalem the feast of the fortieth day spread over the entire Church and later was kept on February 2, since within the last twenty-five years of the fourth century the Roman feast of Christ's nativity (December 25) was introduced.

The feast appears in the *Gelasianum* (manuscript tradition of the seventh century) under the title of Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but the procession is not mentioned. Pope Sergius I (A.D. 687-701) introduced a procession for this day. The *Gregorianum* (tradition of the eighth century) does not speak of this procession, which fact shows that the procession of Sergius was the ordinary "station," not the liturgical act of today.

The blessing of the candles did not enter into common use before the eleventh century. In the Middle Ages it had an octave in the larger number of dioceses; also today the religious orders whose special object is the veneration of the Mother of God (Carmelites, Servites) and many dioceses (Loreto, the Province of Siena, etc.) celebrate the octave.

### **The blessing of candles**

According to the Roman Missal, the celebrant, in stole and cope of

purple, standing at the epistle side of the altar, blesses the candles (which traditionally were of beeswax). Having sung or recited the five orations prescribed, he sprinkles and incenses the candles. Then he distributes them to the clergy and laity while the choir sings the canticle of Simeon, *Nunc dimittis*. The antiphon “*Lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloriam plebis tuae Israel*” (“A light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel”) is repeated after every verse, according to the medieval custom of singing the antiphons.

During the procession that follows, participants carry lighted candles and the choir sings the antiphon “*Adorna thalamum tuum, Sion*” (“Adorn the bridal chamber, O Zion”) composed by St. John of Damascus, one of the few pieces for which the words and music have been borrowed by the Roman Church from the Greeks. The other antiphons are of Roman origin.

The solemn procession represents the entry of Christ, who is the light of the world, into the Temple of Jerusalem. The procession is always kept on February 2, even when the office and Mass of the feast is transferred to February 3.

Before the reform of the Latin liturgy by St. Pius V (1568), in the churches north and west of the Alps, this ceremony was more solemn. After the fifth oration a preface was sung. The “*Adorna*” was preceded by the antiphon “Ave Maria.”

While today such processions are held inside the church, during the Middle Ages the clergy left the church and visited the cemetery surrounding it. Upon the return of the procession, a priest, carrying an image of the Holy Child, met it at the door and entered the church with the clergy, who sang the canticle of Zachary, “*Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*” (“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel”).

At the conclusion, entering the sanctuary, the choir sang the responsory “*Gaude Maria Virgo*” or the prose “*Inviolata*” or some other antiphon in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

BELIEF by Michael Solitarius

Blest are we that believe in God  
The love of man and of all life is important.  
We remain strong when others fail.  
We if true to Faith will succeed  
And not fall when faced with death.

## Two Jokes.

### Atheist Day

An atheist complained to a Christian friend, "You Christians have your special holidays, such as Christmas and Easter.

The Jews celebrate their national holidays, such as Passover and Yom Kippur. But we atheists have no recognized national holidays. It's unfair discrimination."

His friend replied, "Why don't you celebrate April first?"

### Flight into Egypt

A teacher asked her Sunday School group to draw pictures of their favourite Bible stories. She was puzzled by Patsy's picture, which showed four people on an airplane, so she asked him which story it was meant to represent.

"The flight to Egypt," said Patsy.

"I see ... And that must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus," the teacher said. "But who's the fourth person?"

"Oh, that's Pontius-the Pilot."

### **100+ Club January 2024 Winners**

1<sup>st</sup> prize : Pam Solly

2<sup>nd</sup> prize : Michael Thomas

3<sup>rd</sup> prize : Glyn Davies

## Books of the Bible Quiz

*Find 24 books of the Bible in the following passage:*

I once discovered, merely by a fluke, that many Bible books can be found in ordinary text as long as it is written in Roman script, and I remarked on it to a friend. He had a look very hard to check the facts, but for other people it was a revelation how easy they were to find. One church member, who has a dismal child as you could ever wish to meet, found it a difficult job. A few of them are difficult and you will feel you are in a real jam, especially as the names of the books were not all capitalized, but the truth was that it was an enjoyable quest. One woman, who saw them at the worst moment of their search, says that she brews a cup of tea to help her concentrate, while I know another who sucks on a humbug to get her through. Another, helping his brain by wearing a fez, raced through them all in no time. He was, of course, from Sudan. I elevated him to the top of the list of fastest winners. John Lightfoot, who lives in Sharp's Almshouses, chose an empty evening to devote to



the task and he was working so hard at it that he was up half the night. There are actually 24 books of the Bible in this paragraph, quite a large number, so you may take a little while to complete the whole. In fact I will readily admit it usually takes at least 20 minutes. See how well you can compete.

Relaxation is the golden rule and others will judge sympathetically. Yes, there are some that are harder than others to identify and there may be loud lamentations when the last ones are found. I am sure you will find it a most enjoyable exercise.

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