



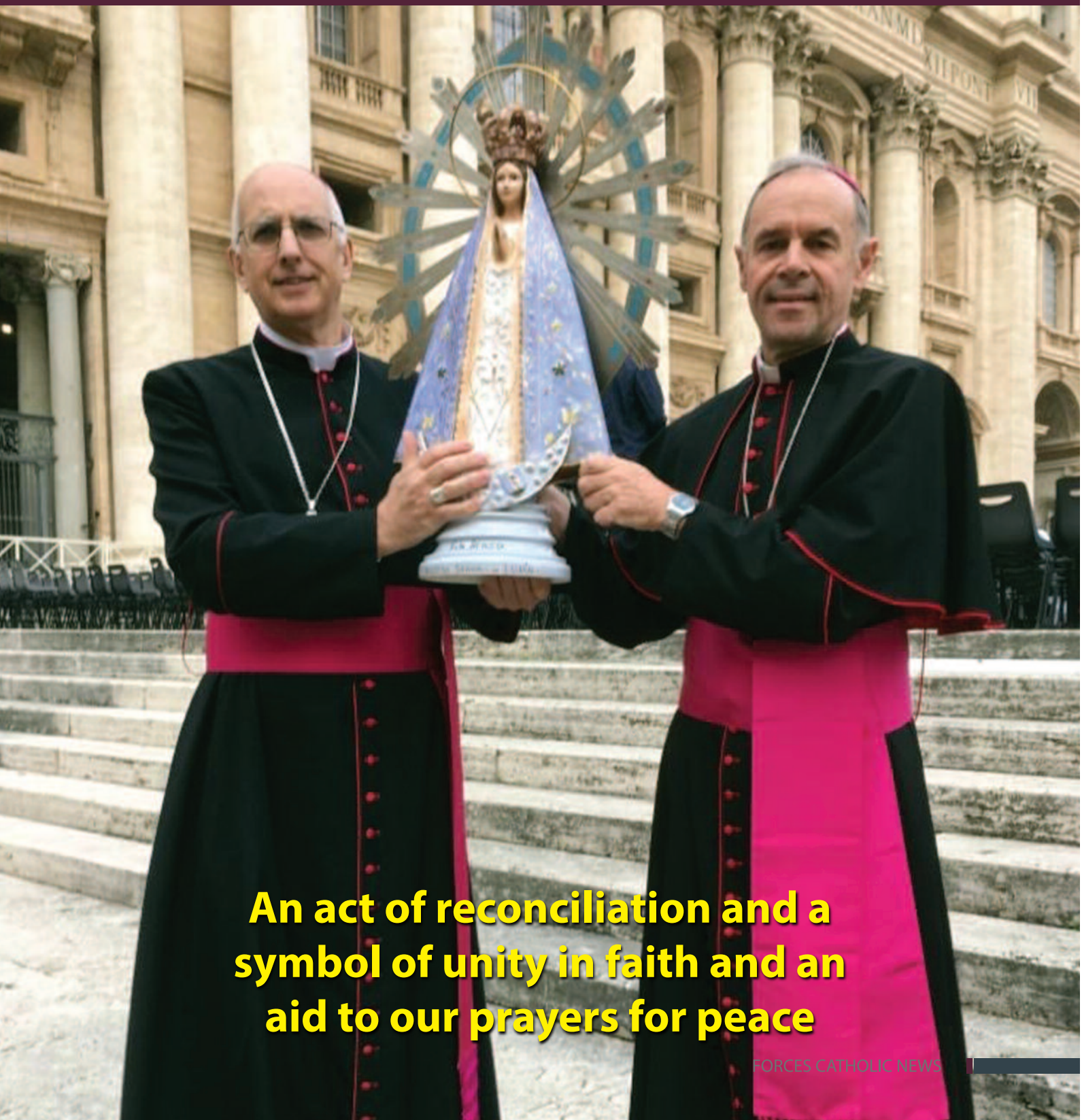
Ministry
of Defence

THE CATHOLIC VOICE FOR MEMBERS
OF OUR ARMED FORCES
AROUND THE WORLD



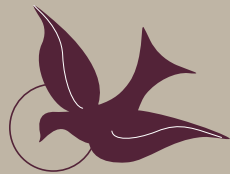
FORCES CATHOLIC NEWS

2020



**An act of reconciliation and a
symbol of unity in faith and an
aid to our prayers for peace**

FORCES CATHOLIC NEWS



Contents

PAGE	ARTICLE
Front Cover	Bishop Paul handing over the Statue of <i>Our Lady of Lujan</i> to the Argentinian Military Ordinary, Bishop Gustavo Olivera
2	Contents
3	Foreword by Rt Rev Paul Mason, Bishop in Ordinary to the Forces Prayer for vocations to Military Chaplaincy
4	Editorial
5	Military Association Approved
6-7	Carmelite Sisters of Dolgellau Monastery celebrate 90 years since their foundation
	Events
8-9	Rise and Shine – HCPT 2019 Pilgrimage to Lourdes
10	Seek peace and pursue it – IMP 2019
11	UK military bishop to return statue to Argentina, 37 years after Falkland’s war – article from CRUX news
12-14	An Act of Reconciliation
15	2019 Annual Naval Masses – Portsmouth and Plymouth
	Chaplains’ Tales
16	New PRCC(RAF)
17	Royal Air Force Pastoral Advisory Group – a Reflection
18-19	PRCC(RAF)’s Report
19	Farewell to two RN Chaplains
20	A touch of nostalgia..!
	Philosophy / Morality
21	Three of a Kind
21	Don’t Screen Us Out!
22-23	Detention in the context of multilateral operations
	Germany Drawdown
23	End of an Era
24-25	Vinaka Fiji!
	In Remembrance
26-27	Remembrance Sunday 2019 – Westminster Cathedral
27	Much loved Bishop of the Forces has grave restored
28-29	WW1 Fallen have their Victory as former foes work together in peace for burial
29	Commemorative plaque erected in Sicily
30	Warriors of the Cross
31	<i>No Ordinary Shepherds</i> - Padres in World War II
Back cover	Editorial Team



Foreword



Writing this foreword, I find myself, like most everyone else, locked down and trying to exercise patience until the country finds an effective exit strategy from the pandemic. I trust by the time you read this we will be on our way to normality, or the “new normal” as it is being called.

Today is VE Day and the irony is not lost on me: our national celebration of victory and liberation finds us both embattled and

locked down. How readily we have seen in these days, however, that same spirit of determination and pulling together of our forebears in WWII. Although we may not be able to mark the 75th anniversary as planned, I am sure it will not stop us from remembering them, thanking them and celebrating the courage of all those who bought our freedom at such cost.

Our Armed Forces, yet again, have been shining examples of service at this time. On the radio this morning I heard Chief of Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter, describe the Armed Forces as providing resilience to our nation, as serving as an “insurance policy” to support our country in time of need. With thousands on stand-by the Armed Forces are providing logistics support to the NHS (transporting PPE from Turkey being an obvious example), working with ambulance services, at COVID testing sites, setting up Nightingale hospitals and so much more. Then we have Captain, or should I say Colonel, Tom Moore who has not only raised millions of pounds for the NHS but has also been something of an inspiration to the country.

Nor are our military chaplains twiddling their thumbs. Although for the most part their usual day-to-day work has either stalled or slowed down, they are able to do their part: military training establishments still have their recruits and the chaplain’s role is key; the live-streaming services from chapels and living rooms have proved effective while contact via telephone and other media have enabled chaplains to provide daily support to military personnel.

Although it may be commonplace to say it, a crisis can and does bring out the best in folk. We rightly look back to previous generations who heroically pulled together in the war effort, making so many sacrifices to fight tyranny. Indeed, there is no harm, and plenty of good, in remembering that we are of the same stock and those self-same qualities are alive and well today. We see it especially in our front-line workers whom we applaud every Thursday evening; we see it in acts of kindness in our neighbourhoods; we see it in our Armed Forces who always have our backs if and when the going gets tough.

If we feel our own contribution is lacking, perhaps due to our own personal circumstances, then do remember to pray for all of those who put themselves in harm’s way for the greater good of our country. Remember also that no matter how small our own contribution to serve others, it all adds to the common good and the common fight.

I commend to you this year’s Forces Catholic News in which you will find many examples of service, of the Gospel at work, through the dedication of so many. I hope you enjoy reading it.

With my prayers and good wishes to you all.

+Paul



PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

O Lord Jesus Christ, instil in the hearts of priests the desire to dedicate their lives to you as chaplains to our Armed Services. Give them wisdom and strength, to hear your call.

Give courage and compassion to those who serve you as Forces Chaplains. May their hearts be filled with zeal and love of you so that your name may be better known and loved, for you live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.



Editorial

Welcome to the 2020 edition of the Forces Catholic News.

The front cover of this edition shows Bishop Paul handing over the *Statue of Our Lady of Lujan* to the Argentinian Military Ordinary, Bishop Gustavo Olivera, as an act of reconciliation between our nations and a symbol of unity in faith and an aid to our prayers for peace. You will find the full story on pages 11-13 including a piece that appeared in CRUX Now.

This edition has a wide selection of articles that recall events that have occurred within and beyond the Bishopric; espouse a theme of philosophy or morality; or are written in memory of those who have died but in their own way have had an impact on our Service Catholic community. As Editor, I belong to the Catholic Diocesan Editors Forum (CDEF), which enables editors of Catholic publications throughout the UK to come together and share our individual experience and ideas. Some members are professional and others like me are pure amateurs. Members of the forum often share articles for publication elsewhere and you will find 3 articles from members of the forum in this edition on pages 6 and 21. I hope you find them interesting.

As usual there are reports on last year's annual pilgrimages with IMP and HCPT to Lourdes (to be found on pages 8-10) and on behalf of our many pilgrims I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude the generosity of various charities who have enabled the costs of the pilgrimages to be reduced to an affordable level for our serving personnel. Without such support many would not have been able to experience the wonders of Lourdes.

A big thank you to those who have contributed articles and also to Austin Crowhurst and Lee Kender from Fizzy Print for their respective contributions to make this a quality production.

Please keep up the momentum for next year's edition. Just a reminder that articles should be submitted in 'Word' format and photographs in 'jpg' format please. The deadline for submission is 15 January 2021, however, it is much easier capturing stories as they arise and whilst fresh in the memory, so I do encourage you to write the article there and then and submit it straight away to ian.crabtree277@mod.gov.uk rather than waiting for the deadline. If you have any comments or ideas regarding the publication, then please let me know.

Happy reading!

Ian Crabtree



Lay Military Association Approved

By Captain Francis Osborn AGC(ETS)



Military Association of Our Lady of Victories crest adapted from Catholic Soldiers Association WW1 memorial in Westminster Cathedral

Living the faith in the military can sometimes feel like a private, even a lonely undertaking, with only a limited circle for support. Some of us are fortunate to have Catholic friends in the Armed Forces but many others have nobody in their unit to turn to for encouragement.

My one experience as a soldier is only one snapshot of experience, but it has matched with others' experiences too. My 2011 enlistment as a soldier involved intense, operationally focused months of basic training, in which our platoon bonded closely. My new peers generally had no Christian foundation whatsoever but were interested in the faith and some even joined in evening prayer and heartfelt novenas when friends were struggling. It was an inspiring time but even so their distance from the faith meant they couldn't provide the moral solidity and accountability that Catholic friends are so good for. My civilian Catholic friends were of course encouraging but couldn't understand the specific struggles and rewards of military life. Without a Catholic chaplain in post at my training establishment, at Phase 2, or in unit, it was difficult to live in the full beauty of the Church, and my spiritual life was frequently weakened. I made mistakes. Fast forward to 2016 and entering Sandhurst, my new peer tended toward polite indifference. Wherever we serve, we face particular challenges when we try to fulfil our God-given mission.

Whether we serve by air, sea or land, we all know that military life is not always an easy place to pursue holiness and draw closer to Our Lord. The challenges vary in pattern and degree, but the same themes prevail: work pressure, separation from family, physical risk, as well as drinking culture, pornography, and amorality.

These challenges, of course, have ancient roots in all military life but so too do the solutions: frequent prayer, the sacraments, spiritual solidarity, and loving, confident embrace of our cross. The host of military holiness, from the ancient Saint Martin, Saint Sebastian and Saint Joan of Arc, to the modern examples of Blessed Charles de Foucauld and Servants of God John Bradburne and Emil Kapaun, reveals the truth: military life can be a foundation for the sort of heroic virtue that we are all called by name to pursue.



A member of the Association in prayer at the Bishop's installation on 12 Sep 2018



Miraculous Medal provided to infanteer in Estonia, 5 Oct 2018

After careful planning with members of the three services, and good counsel from Fr Fava during the sede vacante, the Military Association of Our Lady of Victories established itself as a private association of the faithful in April 2018 and was formally approved by Bishop Paul Mason in January 2020. With only 25 registered members at this early stage, the Association is a network of military Catholics, connected by technology, supporting one another in prayer and work, encouraging each other in the pursuit of virtue. We share the struggles and rewards of Catholic military life. It is early days. We have very little money, but we do have our members and supporters and the prayers of both. Now that we are formally approved, we look forward to working with our Chaplains and sharing this mission more widely.

Find out more on the website: <https://www.militaryassociationofourladyofvictories.co.uk>, consider joining, and spare us a prayer if you can.



Carmelite Sisters of Dolgellau Monastery celebrate 90 years since their foundation

By Katherine Daniels

Courtesy of Catholic Dioceses Editors Forum (CDEF)

On 20 July, the Feast of the Prophet Elijah, the Carmelite Sisters of Dolgellau in Wales celebrated 90 years since our foundation. A beautiful cake bore the Order's motto, Elijah's words: *zelo zelatus sum pro Domino Deo exercituum* ('With zeal I have been zealous for the Lord of hosts') (1 Kgs 19:14). The prophet Elijah is a wonderful symbol of the Carmelite nun's vocation to stand in God's presence (2 Kgs 3.14). As Pope St Gregory the Great said, we stand wherever our mental gaze is directed. The Carmelite nun directs her mental gaze towards God as she prays and goes about her daily work.

The Story of our Foundation

We watched two films about the history of the monastery, put together by one of our novices for the event. It was an opportunity to remember our collective story.

In 1928 the Bishop of Menevia, Francis Vaughan, asked Mother Mary of Jesus, the Prioress of Notting Hill Carmel to found a Carmel in his Diocese to spiritually support his widespread needy Diocese with its small number of

Catholics and scattered lonely priests. Pope Pius XI gave the venture his privileged blessing.

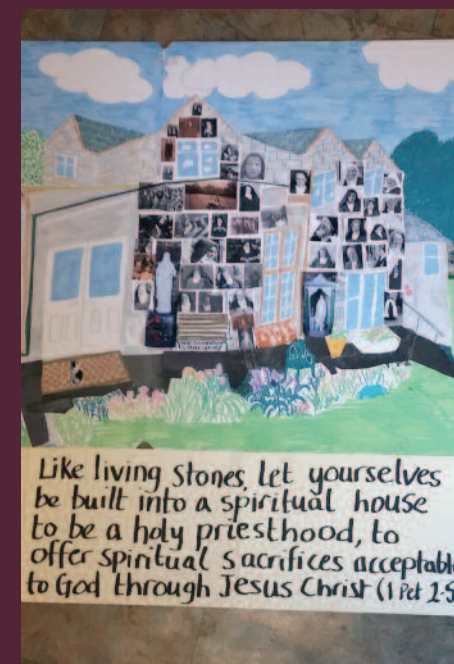
On 21 May 1929, a group of eight founding sisters set off by train for Dolgellau, although they had been warned by a letter from the locals not to come. Pastors told their flocks not to attend the opening ceremony but nonetheless 2000 came. The Holy Spirit seemed to seize people at Holy Mass. Those who came to disrupt Benediction knelt down with great reverence.

Reactions warmed as locals got to know the sisters and Protestant visitors were soon providing alms, glad and surprised to discover that Roman Catholics loved Jesus as they did. These days, thankfully we live in much more ecumenical times.

There was great poverty in the early years and the sisters struggled to support themselves financially by baking altar breads, living off the fried remains, and growing their own fruit and vegetables.

Living Stones

We had a picture of the house, with each sister depicted on a brick, to convey the idea that we are all living stones, making up a spiritual house. We stand on the shoulders of the sisters who have gone before us.



Sr Mary Katherine of the Holy Spirit

One of our hidden saints was Sr Mary Katherine of the Holy Spirit. She had tried her vocation with an active order, unsuccessfully and eventually entered Bridell Carmel in Wales as an extern (a sister who interfaces with the outside world). She came to Dolgellau Carmel in 1976 when we amalgamated with Bridell, thus making the last surviving Welsh Carmel.

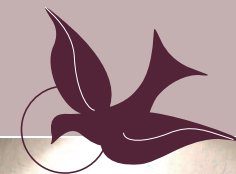
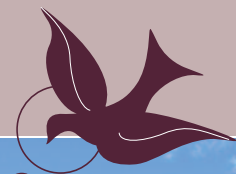
Sr Mary Katherine's mission was to pray for peace in the world. All her sufferings were offered for this intention. When externs were allowed to make solemn profession this was suggested to her by the Prioress in 1993 two years before she died. Even though she was quite confused she understood clearly and asked to do so.

Sr Krystina remembers: 'Sister Katherine was a very loving sister with a very special love for Jesus on His Cross. She contemplated Him permanently I think, using a poor little cross that was often lying on her table. Sometimes she was

very confused in the mornings, and a day which was just beginning seemed to her a very difficult task to cope with. Then she understood that Jesus on that Cross said to her 'Do you think it was easy for Me to die for you?' and she began to go quickly to the Choir to ask Jesus for help, for enlightenment. She would say, 'I am lying on my bed, looking at the sky and praying for peace'. She often told me about her first encounter with a Mother Prioress who said to her 'Today is Friday. It is a day when He died for you' and she used to say 'I like Friday'. As well as being a loving person, she was also a very grateful person, and very poor in heart. She would refer to herself as 'a poor little thing' and yet always after conversation with her, you were aware of true wisdom in what she had said on spiritual matters'.

Could God be calling you to a life of prayer, to be a hermit in community, set apart for God, hidden in Christ?

For more info see www.carmel-dolgellau.uk (under construction).



1 RISE AND SHINE!



In 2019 we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Armed Forces first travelling in support of HCPT's Easter pilgrimage and welcomed Bishop Paul Mason on his first pilgrimage with the Armed Forces Region HCPT. He commented:

"The selfless commitment and hard work of our helpers at Lourdes is a great advert for the ethos of our Armed Services. Getting stuck in, putting the children first in everything and doing it all with such great spirit helps make the HCPT annual pilgrimage the success that it is. I am proud to be associated with such generous individuals."

In those forty years, more than one thousand Service children and hundreds of veterans and dependents have been able to make their pilgrimage, supported by thousands of volunteer helpers from the Service family.

At the national and international levels, HCPT, the Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust is a UK-based Catholic charity offering pilgrimage holidays to Lourdes in the south of France, for disabled and disadvantaged people from around the UK and further afield. Beneficiaries' travel on the basis of their physical, mental, social, emotional or developmental needs. The organisation is founded in response to Our Lady's invitation to go on pilgrimage to Lourdes and aims to enable those who may need help to experience pilgrimage.

HCPT founder, the late Dr Michael Strode, first visited in 1951 and saw the potential to organise a pilgrimage for disabled children at the school where he was working. HCPT itself was founded in 1956 and every Easter, now provides over 1,000 disabled and disadvantaged children an enjoyable week in Lourdes, supported by

up to 2,500 volunteer helpers. Each Summer over 1,500 people, many of them disabled adults, enjoy a week at HCPT's Hosanna House in Bartrès near Lourdes. Volunteers and beneficiaries come from all walks of life and from all faiths and none.

The Armed Forces first became involved in organising pilgrimages for children with disabilities in 1979 and for adults in 1995. As a "Region" within the Trust, the Armed Forces has representatives from each single Service in a variety of groups at Easter, as well as the Joint Services Hosanna House Group (JSHHG) whose Summer Pilgrimage overlaps with the International Military Pilgrimage (IMP).

The Armed Forces Region (AFR) of HCPT is sponsored and supported by the Bishopric of the Armed Forces, each of the single Service chaplaincy services and a variety of Service charities and so provides a unique opportunity to enhance the military's prestige in the wider community by offering a tangible and welcome presence which profiles the personnel of each Service in a context rather different from the public and media perception.

So often our beneficiaries realise what they can do rather than focusing on their limitations and in many cases, the HCPT pilgrimage provides the first opportunity for the children to experience an environment where their condition does not set them apart from the norm but rather is the norm – many observe that Lourdes is the one place where passers-by don't stare. During the Summer pilgrimage, there is a unique opportunity for current serving personnel and veterans or their dependents to interact while in Lourdes.

After more than 40 years, the Armed Forces continue to play a significant part in HCPT and have a tangible and welcomed presence during the Easter Pilgrimage and as part of the UK Contingent at IMP. The commitment of all involved, whether before, during or after the trip, contributes to a fun-filled week on a pilgrimage holiday and provides invaluable respite for families and carers at home.

A few words from the parent of one of the Service children that travelled to Lourdes at Easter in 2019 not only sum up the magic and miracle of Lourdes as well as the difference that can be made and the benefits seen; but are also testament to the efforts of all involved:

I would like to be able to take the opportunity to thank the group for the fantastic week at Lourdes. When you have a child who does not want to go anywhere because he has no confidence in himself, is shy around others and finds it hard to trust, I can honestly say he came back a different person. [He] feels happy and cannot stop talking about the wonderful time he has had and how many friends he has made. The whole experience for any child who has difficulties is one of self-awareness, giving them the opportunity to express themselves and their spiritual side and feelings of self-worth.

Any child who gets the opportunity to go will never regret it.

Parents of children who need help are apprehensive about sending their child and will sometimes not take the offer of a place, but I can assure you it would be one of the best decisions you can make not only for your child but for yourself and other siblings. You get to do things you would not normally be able to do. The week away from each other has made us appreciate each other even more and we both feel refreshed and revalue how much we love each other.

Once again thank you so much for letting us have this opportunity to participate in what can only be described as a pilgrimage of all different people who come together for one cause.

The personal contributions and fundraising efforts of the volunteers and generous grants from benefactors including the RC Trusts and charities such as RNRMC mean that there is no charge for the children's pilgrimage holiday or the respite service offered.

Each year a DIN provides information about both AFR pilgrimages and HCPT's series of short videos is available from their website <http://www.hcpt.org.uk/>. The videos feature the Easter pilgrimage, as well as the extended programme of Summer pilgrimages for adults, and show how the work of the charity benefits the disabled and disadvantaged. In its 3½ minutes, the introductory video speaks volumes; please take a few moments to enjoy it and pass on the above link to those that may be interested.

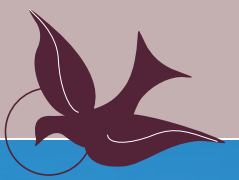
Plans are already afoot for 2020 and 2021 and as always – volunteers, financial support and nominations of children or elder beneficiaries are always welcomed.

As is so often the case with anything to do with the Armed Forces, deployment and reappointment provide impetus for change. Over the coming year we want to work with interested volunteers from the Army to help rebuild its family group (Gp182). If you know of anyone that might be interested in helping then please send them our way.

If you think you would like to volunteer, know someone who would benefit or could assist us the AFR in fundraising, then please contact me or pass on my contact information to any others that may be interested: armedforces@hcpt.org.uk or olivia.steel357@mod.gov.uk

- 1: Bishop Paul leading prayers.
- 2: RN 40th Logo: White Ensign with Lourdes motif top right; numeral pennants 4 bottom left and 0 bottom right.
- 3: The Armed Forces Region in St Joseph's Chapel.
- 4: A shy, retiring beneficiary?
- 5: A couple of the beneficiaries.
- 6: HCPT Group 186 with their charity banner.





Seek peace and pursue it – IMP 2019



1

A match made in ... Lourdes!!

Although the format of the International Military Pilgrimage (IMP) is the same each year, every pilgrimage is different! For IMP 2019 there were two significant things that stood out. One was the UK contingent being led by their Bishop after 3 years of *sede vacante* and it was, therefore, with great joy that our pilgrims welcomed Bishop Paul Mason to his first IMP. Commenting on the IMP, the Bishop said:

"It's a wonderful time for different nations to come together. We've had the opportunity to pray hard and to play hard. We'll spend time in church together but in the evenings, we'll get to know each other and it's very high-spirited – a healthy atmosphere. I'm not sure there are many places that would provide a context for this type of engagement. Lourdes has got something very special about it."

The second was the witnessing of a proposal of marriage by Sgt Maj Alain Beaujeant (German Airforce) to Maj Karen Oliveira QARANC which took place in front of the UK contingent as they formed up outside Hotel Alba, ready to march off for one of the IMP events. The couple received an enthusiastic round of applause and cheers from their fellow pilgrims. For some pilgrims this was their first experience of Lourdes. One of them commented:

"Going to Church opened my eyes. The padres are always there to talk to us if we need them. I'd been through some bad times and some low times before being in the Army. Things like this experience in Lourdes can only help me. People are so friendly, it's unbelievable."

Quotes courtesy of: Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales website: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/the-bishops/bishopric-of-the-forces/international-military-pilgrimage/>

Sadly, as we go to press, it has been announced that owing to the Coronavirus crisis the 62nd IMP will no longer take place in 2020 but has been postponed to May 21-23 2021.

- 1: Sgt Maj Alain Beaujeant (German Airforce) proposes to Maj Karen Oliveira QARANC
- 2: Major Karen responds
- 3: The happy couple on their way back to Germany by train after the IMP
- 4: Lourdes Basilica by night
- 5: Marching to the votive stands led by the National Colour and the Bishop
- 6: Candlelight procession



4



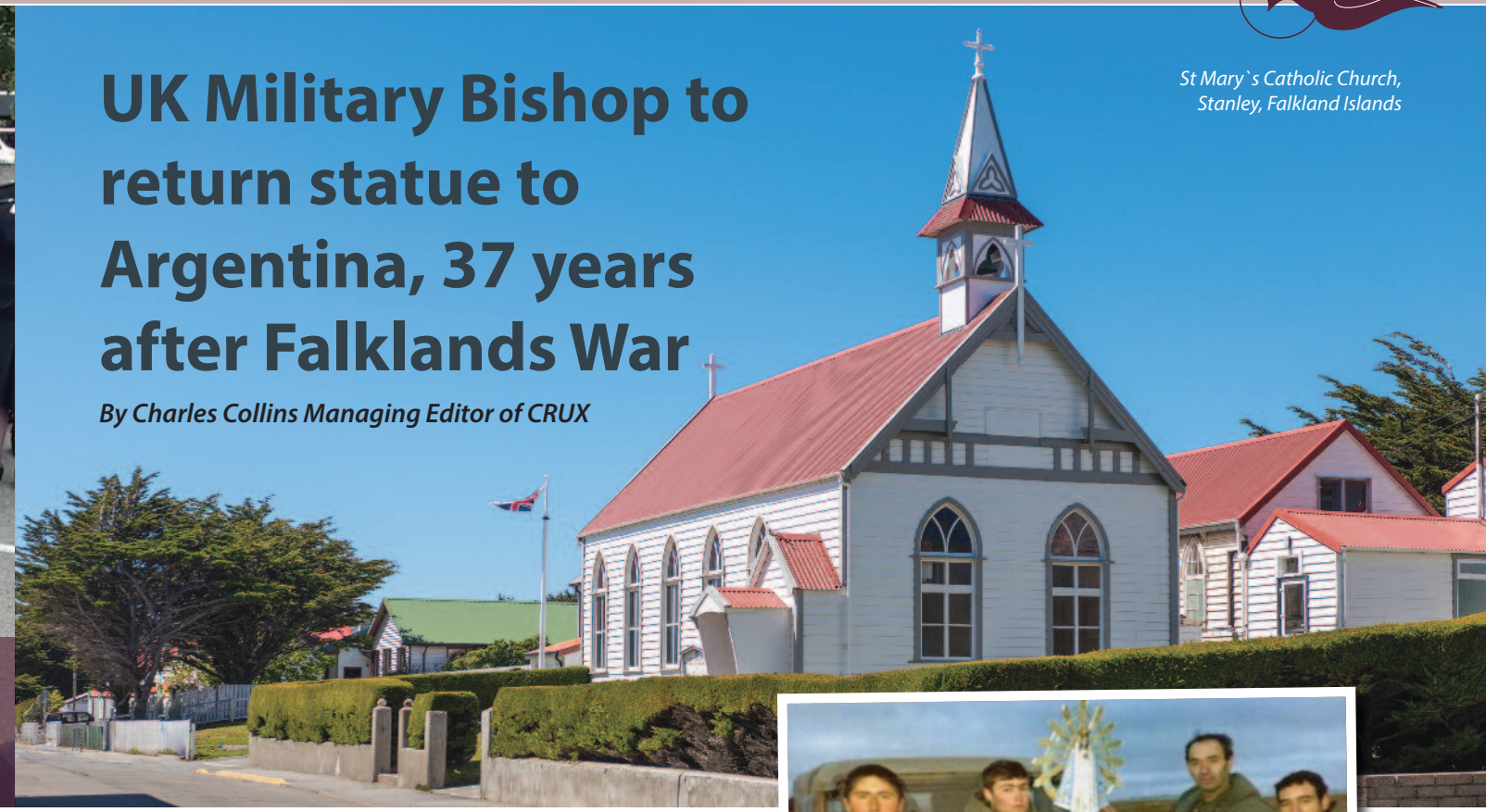
5



6

UK Military Bishop to return statue to Argentina, 37 years after Falklands War

By Charles Collins Managing Editor of CRUX



St Mary's Catholic Church, Stanley, Falkland Islands

After 37 years, the statue of Our Lady of Luján used in the chapel for the Argentinian forces on the Falkland Islands, will be going home in an act of reconciliation that will be personally blessed by Pope Francis. The image is currently housed in England's Catholic Military Cathedral of St. Michael and St. George in Aldershot.

Argentina invaded the British-owned islands in the South Atlantic on April 2, 1982. Britain organized a task force and retook the islands after two months in a conflict that claimed the lives of 649 Argentines and 255 British soldiers.

The statue of Our Lady of Luján was placed in St. Mary's Church in the capital, Port Stanley, and was left in the Falklands when the Argentinian military evacuated. The statue was then taken to England, to serve as a focus of prayer for the fallen of both countries.

The image is a replica of the 16th century icon housed in Luján, about 40 miles northwest of Buenos Aires. Our Lady of Luján is the patroness of Argentina, as well as the patroness for military chaplains.

Soon after being installed as the Bishop of the Forces in September 2018, Bishop Paul Mason was contacted by his Argentinian counterpart, Bishop Santiago Olivera, who requested the return of the statue.

"In mid-2018, a lay leader who was part of the Catholic group La Fe del Centurión, which conducts spiritual retreats for war veterans and family members in the Diocese of Quilmes, read a report about an English military doctor, who spoke about the image of Our Lady of Luján in the British military cathedral, and that was the first step. Once the origin of the image was confirmed, the process began for her return," Bishop Olivera told *La Nacion*, an Argentinian daily.

Bishop Olivera's request was accompanied by an offer: He would provide a replica of the statue for Aldershot Cathedral, so the image could continue to be venerated for the intention of the fallen



Argentinian soldiers pose with a statue of Our Lady of Luján during the 1982 Falklands War. (Credit: Military Diocese for Argentina.)

troops. The two statues will be exchanged on October 30th during a conference for military bishops taking place in Rome, after being blessed by Pope Francis. Bishop Olivera had spoken to the Argentine pontiff about the statue during his *ad limina* visit to Rome in May. *"He asked us to wait for him to have a free moment in his schedule, because he wanted to bless the image personally,"* Bishop Olivera told *La Nacion*.

"It was an intriguing story that met me when first installed as Bishop of the Forces, and I immediately realised what a good opportunity it was, not only to return the statue, but also to demonstrate a united faith across two countries that have experienced political division," Bishop Mason said.

The statue of Our Lady of Luján will arrive in Argentina on November 3rd and will be welcomed in a ceremony involving the armed forces and veterans of the 1982 conflict. The next day, the image will be present during the plenary assembly of the Argentinian bishops' conference taking place in the city of Pilar.

Argentina asserted its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, which they call the Malvinas, but in 1998 then-President Carlos Menem pledged to use only peaceful means to assert the country's claims.

Taken from an article published in the CRUX on 19 September 2019



Bishop Paul with the original statue in the Cathedral of St Michael & St George, Aldershot

An Act of Reconciliation

By Father Michael Fava CBE QHC

Pope Francis with Bishop Paul holding the replica statue



Records indicate that seven days after the Argentinian Forces invaded the Falkland Islands, a statue of Our Lady of Luján, patroness of Argentina, was brought to the islands on 9 April 1982 and initially placed in a chapel at the Air Base. It was soon transferred to the Catholic Parish Church of St Mary's in the capital, Port Stanley. Allegedly, the last Mass celebrated there for Argentinian personnel in the presence of the image, took place on 8 May 1982 - five weeks before their surrender on 14 June 1982.

At the time of the conflict, a former British Army chaplain, Monsignor Danny Spraggon (1912 – 1985), was based in Port Stanley caring for the parish of St Mary's in his role as the Apostolic Administrator for the South Atlantic. With the end of hostilities in mid-June, Father Alf Hayes, the serving Catholic Army Chaplain embedded with the UK Task Force, asked Monsignor Spraggon's permission to take the image to the Catholic Bishopric Cathedral of the Forces, St Michael and St George, Aldershot, to honour the dead combatants from both sides. It has remained in the Cathedral's Lady Chapel ever since.

In 2018 an Argentinian layman, who organises spiritual retreats for war veterans and relatives, read an account of a British medic stating that an image of Our Lady of Luján was in the Aldershot Cathedral and he informed the Argentinian Military Ordinary, Bishop Gustavo Olivera in Buenos Aires.

After his installation as UK Catholic Bishop of the Forces in September 2018 Bishop Paul Mason was contacted by Bishop Olivera, who asked if the image could be returned to Argentina as a gesture of goodwill and reconciliation. He undertook to provide a replica for the Bishopric Cathedral in Aldershot to take its place. Bishop Paul stated,

"It was an intriguing story that met me when first installed as Bishop of the Forces and I immediately realised what a good opportunity it was - not only to return the statue, but also to demonstrate a united faith across two countries that have experienced political division and conflict."

Following his affirmative response,

Bishop Olivera contacted Pope Francis during the ad limina visit of Argentine bishops to Rome, who showed an immediate interest.

"He asked me for time so he could find a space in his agenda since he wanted to personally bless the image, and we agreed on 30 October 2019",

said Bishop Olivera. The exchange of statues was timed to coincide with the presence of both bishops at the 5th International Course for the Formation of Catholic Military Chaplains to International Humanitarian Law taking place in the Vatican on that date.

The Public Audience in St Peter's Square on 30 October 2019 proved an ideal

context in which to stage this unique act of reconciliation between the Military Ordinaries of the United Kingdom and Argentina. During the handover, Pope Francis blessed and kissed the image, and was clearly very moved as he did so, appearing to wipe away tears during the ceremony.

The British party supporting Bishop Paul comprised myself in my capacity as Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (Army), together with my opposite numbers from the Royal Navy and the RAF, Fr David Conroy QHC RN, and Deacon David Skillen RAF. Most significantly we were joined by

Continued overleaf

Bishop Olivera (left) receives the original statue from Bishop Mason



Continued

Falklands chaplain veterans Father Alf Hayes who had brought the statue to Britain at the end of the war (and who was able to give the Holy Father his first-hand account of this in fluent Spanish), and Monsignor Phelim Rowland who served there in 1982 as a RN chaplain before transferring to the Army soon thereafter.

In the Argentinian party with Bishop Olivera were veterans Jorge Palacio, former chaplain Father Vicente Martinez Torrens, and a group of relatives of those who died in the conflict.

In an official statement released by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Bishop Paul Mason said:

"At both of the respective Military Cathedrals the congregations have been asked to pray for each other and for peace. The statues will serve as an ongoing reminder to pray for all of those who fell in the Falklands War, while also giving us a symbol of unity in faith and an aid to our prayers for peace."

Bishop Gustavo Olivera stated that this event was a "sign of fraternity" which arises from the fraternal bond between two peoples who are "children of the same mother". He added,

"It comes at a very particular moment for Argentina, in which we have to be reminded of the fact that we can have different ideas, or travel different paths, but we are always brothers and sisters".

It is to be hoped that the wounds of those veterans and family members present on 30 October 2019 in Rome were healed in some small measure.

Our Lady of Luján, intercede for us all with your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ!



From left: Fr Hayes, Deacon Skillen RAF, Fr Conroy QHC RN, Bishop Mason, Fr Fava CBE QHC RACHD, Mgr Rowland



Bishop Olivera with Fr Torrens and Jorge Palacio



The Sanctuary at Portsmouth Cathedral with the White Ensign and naval artefacts on the altar step

2019 Annual Naval Mass – Portsmouth and Plymouth

For many years the Cathedral parishes of Portsmouth and Plymouth have hosted an Annual Naval Mass in July either on or close to Sea Sunday. These Masses signify the close relationship between the Catholic communities in the Royal Navy and the local cathedral parishes that border the south coast Naval Bases at Portsmouth and Devonport. Serving personnel are encouraged to attend in uniform and are often invited to assist with the liturgy.

In Portsmouth Fr David Conroy, PRCC(N), presided and gave the homily. The bidding prayers were accompanied by naval artefacts, a sextant, lamp and a ship's bell, being processed to the altar by serving personnel, while a large white ensign was displayed behind the priest's chair on the sanctuary.

The principal celebrant at Plymouth was Bishop Paul Mason who was joined in the concelebration by Fr Robert Matau RN, RC Chaplain to HMS Raleigh, and cathedral clergy. Sailors from HMS Raleigh participated as altar servers.

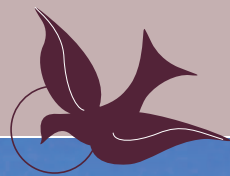
After both Masses a reception was held in the respective Cathedral Hall, hosted by the Royal Navy, who provided suitable refreshments to extend their hospitality to local clergy and parishioners.



Fr Robert and Bishop Paul processing out after Mass in Plymouth Cathedral



The Bishop with Fr Robert and sailors from HMS Raleigh in Plymouth Cathedral grounds



New PRCC(RAF)

"Listen, O my son, to the precepts of thy master, and incline the ear of thy heart..."

Prologue of the Rule of St Benedict

After 8 years in the role, Father James Caulfield stood down as Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (RAF) (PRCC(RAF)) on the Feast of St Benedict (11th July) 2019 and handed over to his successor Deacon Dave Skillen. For Padre Dave this was "an exciting and scary prospect both rolled into one moment!"

Having graduated in 1996 with a BA (hons) in Popular Music Studies (Leeds), Dave Skillen joined Cumbria Constabulary as a Constable and on exiting the service, after almost five years, he entered the world of Catholic Education. He was ordained Deacon on the Feast of St Benedict in July 2010 and the following year obtained his Master's degree in Catholic Pastoral & Educational Studies (OU).

Joining the RAF Chaplaincy Branch in 2014, his first posting after training at RAF Cranwell, was RAF Brize Norton as Station Chaplain, where he was awarded the CO's Commendation for his work during Op TAILPIN (repatriation of 30 British civilians shot on a beach in Tunisia in 2015). He also completed a four-month detachment to British Forces South Atlantic Islands as Force Chaplain at the end of which he received the Commander British Force's Commendation for outstanding service. In July 2016 he moved to RAF Halton as Station Chaplain and in January 2019 he was deployed on Op SHADER. He is currently serving in the chaplaincy team at RAF Odiham.

Dave is married to Nichola, has three sons and enjoys sport, especially running, rugby, cycling and snooker, and listening, playing and writing most types of music.



St Benedict has had a great influence on his life brought about by living his younger years in a part of the country with a Benedictine spiritual heritage and attending a Benedictine school. It played a significant part in his calling to be a Deacon and subsequent study of theology and to top it all, his wife was born on the Feast of St Benedict!

Dave says of his role: *"I am excited about the future, working with so many committed Catholic Service personnel and their families and my hugely supportive chaplaincy colleagues and our Bishop. I am also excited ecumenically as I seek to play my part in building on the strong friendships the Catholic chaplaincy enjoys within the broader military Christian community. The Lord feels very close at hand and present in our midst".*

Royal Air Force Pastoral Advisory Group – a Reflection

By Wing Commander Jem Wynne RAF
Chairman of the RAF Pastoral Advisory Group

Members of the RAF PAG meeting at Douai Abbey in February



With the installation of Rev (Sqn Ldr) David Skillen as the Royal Air Force's new Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (PRCC) in July 2019 it is an ideal time to reflect on the activity of the Royal Air Force Pastoral Advisory Group (PAG).

The RAF PAG has been active since it was first created, under the direction of the then Bishop to the Forces, Bishop Tom Burns, in 2006. Monsignor John Daley was the RAF PRRC at that time, and he gathered together a group of interested and committed lay Catholics serving in the RAF to provide support to the RAF PRRC, his Chaplains, and to the wider RAF RC Community. This was at a time when it was recognised that the number of Catholic Chaplains within the RAF was low and getting lower. Sadly, that situation has not improved. The work and support of the PAG, then, is even more important now than it was in 2006.

The RAF PAG meets quarterly. It is made up of individuals from across the RAF's rank structure and geographical locations. The PAG has always sought to include junior ranks within its membership, providing an ideal opportunity for personal and professional development. As well as the Chair and the RAF PRRC, other members take a lead for the RAF's involvement in the International Military Pilgrimage, with the HCPT pilgrimage, and with the annual

solemn Mass of Remembrance at Westminster Cathedral. The PAG also has dependants, veterans, and ecumenical representation as well as a communications lead. We are also able to mobilise to support one-off events such as the Papal Visit to the UK in 2010, the installation of the Bishop to the Forces, World Youth Day, and the RAF 100 Mass in 2018. We are providing support to the organisation of the Apostolat Militaire International (AMI) Conference taking place in London this year.

The PAG primarily seeks to serve and support the RAF RC community, be they serving or retired members of the regular or reserve force, RAF dependants, and members of our sister Services or civilians working at RAF establishments. We can use our collective experience and service knowledge to support and provide guidance to our PRRC and the other RC Chaplains. We aim to communicate to the RAF RC community on faith matters, providing witness, a presence and encouragement to a network of Catholics. Our methods of communication continue to move with the times; although we still

produce a regular newsletter, we now have a Facebook presence (RAF RC Group) and a site on Defence Connect. We will soon have access to a smartphone app.

The constitution of the RAF PAG calls for the PAG to support and encourage vocations to the Chaplaincy. We have had at least 2 members of the PAG become permanent Deacons, including Rev (Sqn Ldr) Neil Galloway who, as a SNCO communications specialist, was a founder member of the PAG and has now returned to the PAG as a serving Chaplain.

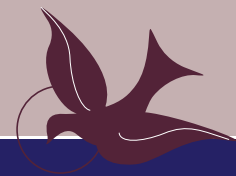
The PAG can be justly proud of its initiative in organising the annual RAF Retreat series. These continue to go from strength to strength and are firmly established within the RAF calendar to provide a space for respite and reflection and to assist with an understanding of the moral component of conflict. Countless numbers of RAF personnel have participated in the Retreats over the years. In the past we have visited Ampleforth Abbey in North Yorkshire but more recently have enjoyed the unique Benedictine spirituality provided by the communities at Belmont Abbey, Herefordshire and Worth Abbey, West Sussex. This year the response to the calling notice has been phenomenal, so much so, that we are organising a third Retreat to cope with unprecedented demand.

Recently the RAF PAG held its meeting at Douai Abbey in Berkshire and was able to combine the business of the meeting with an overnight stay and a period of prayer and reflection. We were honoured and privileged that Bishop Paul was able to join us at Douai as we discussed our full programme for 2020 and beyond. Fr Oliver, a monk of Douai, led us in a period of reflection with a theme of, 'Finding space for God among the noise and busyness of life'. All found much of value as Fr Oliver reminded us of the opening words of the rule of St Benedict:

Listen, my son, to the instructions of your Master, turn the ear of your heart to the advice of a loving father.

It has been my privilege to serve the RAF RC Community through the PAG for over a decade. The aim of the PAG remains constant with service of God and of others at its core. Please pray for our Chaplains, for more vocations to military Chaplaincy, and for the work of the RAF PAG.





PRCC(RAF)'s Report



Farewell to Fr James Caulfield

I had the privilege on Thursday 10th October 2019 to dine-out Fr James Caulfield from his RAF Catholic service at the Principal Roman Catholic Chaplains' (PRCC) Annual Dinner at the RAF Club in London. This was a fabulous and moving evening which rightly celebrated Fr James' 22 years of regular service, the last 8 of which he held the position of PRCC. Fr James was thanked for all he had done by Bishop Paul and by the Chaplain-in-Chief,

Padre John Ellis, and the whole gathering wished him well in his new venture as parish priest of Our Lady & St Charles Borromeo, Wisbech. RC RAF Trustee, Wg Cdr Chris Thorpe, gave a fitting tribute to Fr James' long military service recognising that he (James) is 'RAF to the core'. Chris recalled with 'great fondness' the years of collaboration and friendship he (and his family) had had with Fr James. This was a feeling echoed across the room.

Bishopric Medal Awards

Four worthy recipients were put forward by Fr James Caulfield for the award of the Bishopric Medal for their contribution to the RAF Catholic mission over many years, with the following citations:

Mrs Yvonne Tetlow has given over 25 years' service as sacristan to the Roman Catholic communities at St Patrick's Military Chapel Watchfield and since 2003 St Alban's Military Chapel at the UK Defence Academy, Shrivenham. In addition to her duties in the sacristy she provided support to the chaplains as a seamstress. Her commitment and dedication to the support of the Bishopric continues in her daily prayer.

Wing Commander Olivia Steel has been a stalwart of the Pastoral Advisory Group for many years and has served as co-chair for the past 6 years. In addition to her duties on the PAG, Wing Commander Steel has been inspirational in ensuring that the work of the Hosanna House Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT) has been outstanding. Taking on the mantle of Group Leader of Grp 187 (RAF) following the death of Flt Lt Matt Alan, she has not only built upon his work but inspired the revitalisation of the Army group and the establishment of the new Jet Set Group.

Now retired from the Army, **Lt Col Christopher Parker** has been tireless in supporting the Roman Catholic community in the UK Defence Academy. When we experienced a six month interregnum and in recent months during the transition from a regular service Chaplain to the appointment of an Officiating Chaplain to the Military (OCM), he has provided invaluable service. His continued commitment to Roman Catholic Service Veterans is also worthy of note.



Wg Cdr Jeremy Wynn has provided invaluable support to the Pastoral Advisory Group since its reformation in 2005. For the past 6 years he has acted as Co-Chair and provided excellent support to the Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain. His support was particularly valuable during the 18 months that Rev (Wg Cdr) Caulfield was the only uniformed Roman Catholic chaplain in the RAF. Without Jem's prayer and good natured support this period would have been an unbearable burden. His continued support and commitment make him a worthy recipient of this Bishopric Medal.



Padre Dave Skillen PRCC(RAF) with Bishop Paul



A view of London from the back of a Chinook

Bishop Paul visits RAF Odiham

On Thursday 5th December 2019, Bishop Paul visited RAF Odiham, Joint Helicopter Force and home to the Chinook Helicopter. Bishop Paul hoped to gain an insight into the life and pressures of service personnel, their families and indeed the Whole Force, at this very particular military Unit. His experience did not disappoint! He met with the Station Commander, Group Captain Nick Knight, and gained an insight into the joys, priorities and challenges of Command at what is an intensely high Op-tempo Unit.

Bishop Paul spent time with: the chaplaincy team and their families; with a vast array of uniformed and civil service staff responsible for the broad welfare and pastoral care of all who live and work here; at the Air Traffic Control tower; and at the Dog Section. Finally, Bishop Paul was invited to accompany the crew on board a Chinook Helicopter for one of their training sorties which took us over central London and the River Thames.

The Bishop left with a great insight into life at RAF Odiham and a deeper sense of the importance and the value of RAF Chaplains supporting a Main Operating Base (MOB) and its impact on operational output.

Farewell to two long serving Naval Chaplains

Monsignor Andrew McFadden



Mgr Andrew with David Lodrick and Fr David Conroy

To mark the retirement of Monsignor Andrew McFadden QHC RN from the Royal Navy after 22 years' service, the last 7 as Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (Naval), a group of friends and colleagues dined him out at his favourite Portsmouth hostelry, *The Still and West*. Fr David Conroy, PRCC(N), presented Fr Andrew with

a Night Decanter Set suitably engraved with the Naval Chaplaincy Service crest as a memento from the Naval Catholic community.

During his time in Portsmouth, Fr Andrew built up a good friendship with the priests and parishioners at Portsmouth Cathedral who also wished to celebrate his retirement. This they did in fine style after a Sunday Mass, at which Fr Andrew presided, when they presented him with a cake and a framed etching of the statue of St John the Evangelist, one of the Cathedral's patrons.



Fr Michael with the Bishop, fellow chaplains and some of the congregation in the BRNC Catholic Chapel

Fr Michael Sharkey

To say farewell and celebrate 29 years 'before the mast', Fr Michael Sharkey QHC RN concelebrated a Mass with the Bishop and fellow chaplains at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, on 26th September 2019. Having recently served as the Catholic Chaplain at BRNC it was fitting that this should be the venue to formalise his departure from the Royal Navy with a small group of friends and parishioners. After Mass, Fr Michael was presented with a Night Decanter set, with the decanter suitably engraved with the Naval Chaplaincy Service crest. Later in the evening the chaplains joined Fr Michael in a farewell dinner at the Castle Hotel in the town, one of Fr Michael's favourite haunts!





A touch of nostalgia..!

A look back at Amport House, home of the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre (AFCC), until March 2020 when AFCC moved to Beckett House, Shrivenham, near Swindon and the site sold.



Amport House is a manor house in the village of Amport, near Andover, Hampshire. It is now a Grade II listed building. Built in an Elizabethan style, it was constructed in 1857 by John Paulet, 14th Marquess of Winchester and replaced two earlier houses built on the site. The last of the Paulet family to reside at Amport was Henry Paulet, 16th Marquess of Winchester, who (facing high levels of taxation at the end of the First World War) sold the estate in lots between November 1918 and July 1919. Not long afterwards the house was purchased by Colonel Sofer Whitburn DSO, who in 1923 engaged Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll to redesign the gardens.

At the start of the Second World War, the house was requisitioned to be used as the headquarters of Royal Air Force Maintenance Command; as well as ceding them use of the house, Sofer Whitburn is said to have donated his entire wine cellar to the Officers' Mess as a patriotic gesture. He sold the house in 1943 (with the RAF still in possession); ultimately the RAF itself bought the property in 1957. Later that year the Royal Air Force Chaplains' School moved from Dowdeswell Court in Dowdeswell to Amport House. The School, which had included a Royal Navy chaplain staff member, became the tri-service Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre in 1996 on the closure of the depot of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department at Bagshot Park.

There is a stable block (once home of the Museum of Army Chaplaincy), Gatehouse and a pleached avenue of lime trees, believed to be the longest such avenue in the United Kingdom.

For many years Amport has provided the venue for Chaplains' conferences and courses in addition to a number of pastoral courses, such as listening skills and bereavement counselling, and providing general conference and meeting facilities for the wider Service community. Famed for its tranquil environment it will be fondly remembered by many who passed through its doors. Here are some pictures of the house and estate.



Three of a kind

By Julia Beacroft, Catholic Dioceses Editors Forum (CDEF)

April is quite an expensive time for me each year as we have three family birthdays that month – my daughter-in-law and my own twins. It may be twenty-seven years since they were born but I can distinctly remember an episode that occurred when I was expecting them...

DISAPPOINTED

Accompanied by my husband, we had gone to the hospital for my second scan. We had just about recovered from the shock of the first one, when we were told that we were going to be the proud parents of twins! Then my husband told me that he was disappointed that they hadn't found a third baby at that second scan – and he was serious! Needless to say, I was astounded and also very relieved that this hadn't, in fact, happened!

NOT BY CHANCE

There is a school of thought which suggests that both bad things and good things can come in threes. I'm not too sure of the veracity of this, but it is true that trilogies work well, ornamental groupings always look better in threes and a three-course meal is usually a recipe for success!

The number three is a highly significant biblical and theological number, of course. God calls Samuel three times; the Magi brought the infant Jesus three gifts; Jesus goes back to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray three times; and he also repeats the phrase 'feed my sheep' to Peter three times. Peter, of course, had previously denied Christ three times. It further goes without saying that we can't talk about the number three in this context without referring to the significant fact of Jesus rising from the dead after a period of three days. In fact, in Jewish culture at that time, three days after the time of death indicated that a person was truly dead, so this made Jesus' resurrection all the more remarkable for the people of that era – and obviously this didn't happen by chance.

SIGNIFICANT

Finally, we can't consider the number three without looking at the Trinity. God is three in one – the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our God is a trinitarian God above all other.

And so, whether our good and bad things come in ones, twos or threes, we can always be assured and reassured that we worship, adore and give thanks to a God who is three-in-one. I myself, may not have received three babies for the price of one, (two was quite enough!) but my faith shows me that three is, and continues to be, a significant number in our lives. Thanks be to God!

Copyright © 2020 Julia Beacroft. All rights reserved. Julia Beacroft is an author, editor, workshop leader and presenter in Catholic faith formation.



Don't Screen Us Out!

Courtesy of Edwina Gillett, Catholic Dioceses Editors Forum (CDEF)

Shockingly published figures highlight that 90% of babies who are prenatally diagnosed with Down's Syndrome are aborted.

Heidi Crowter, a 24-year-old woman from Coventry who has Down's syndrome, has joined forces with Cheryl Bilsborrow of St Mary's parish in Great Eccleston, to launch a landmark case against the UK Government under the banner 'Don't Screen Us Out' over the current discriminatory abortion law which allows abortion up to birth for Down's syndrome.



Cheryl has a two-year-old son, Hector, with Down's syndrome. Cheryl recounted a conversation she had following a prenatal test when she was offered a termination for Hector at 38 weeks gestation because Hector happened to have Down's Syndrome. Cheryl replied in shock and disgust "I'll pretend I didn't hear that."

Currently in England, Wales and Scotland, there is a general 24-week time limit for abortion, but if the baby has a disability, including Down's syndrome, cleft lip and club foot, abortion is legal right up to birth.

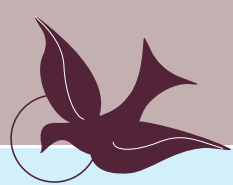
Appearing with Cheryl on the Victoria Derbyshire show in February and doing several media interviews, Heidi said:

"At the moment in the UK, babies can be aborted right up to birth if they are considered to be 'seriously handicapped'. They include me in that definition of being seriously handicapped – just because I have an extra chromosome! Can you believe that? What it says to me is that my life just isn't as valuable as others, and I don't think that's right. I think its downright discrimination!"

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recently said that the United Kingdom should change its abortion law to make sure that people like me aren't singled out because of our disabilities.

Sadly, the Government decided to ignore their recommendations and didn't change the law. So now, I am going to take the Government to court with other members of the Down's syndrome community to make sure that people aren't treated differently because of their disabilities."

Heidi and her legal team have set up a CrowdJustice crowdfunding page to help raise the initial £20,000 to start legal proceedings, pay for legal advice and begin the preparation of the case. To find out more and to make a contribution to the case please visit: <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/downrightdiscrimination/>.



The Apostolat Militaire International (AMI) is a lay organization, endorsed by the Vatican and governed by the General Assembly of delegates (AMI Statute) made up of the Executive Committee (EC) and national delegations from four different continents of 18 full members, including Great Britain, 3 open memberships and 19 friends/associated members.

The purposes of AMI, based on its Non-Government Organisation (NGO) status, are: to promote at the national and international level the affirmation of a Christian vision of military life and of the values that characterize this vision; to promote and support international understanding and cooperation, as a contribution to strengthening peace; to study together, in the light of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church, the spiritual, moral and social problems peculiar to the military sphere.

Detention in the context of multilateral OPERATIONS

Members of the AMI Executive Committee were invited to participate in the fifth International Course for the Formation of Catholic Military Chaplains to International Humanitarian Law, that took place last October in Rome, on the theme: *"The Deprivation of Liberty in the Context of Armed Conflicts. The Mission of Military Chaplains"*.

AMI President, Vice-Adm Matthieu Borsboom, Royal Netherlands Navy, was invited to present the topic *"Detention in the context of multilateral operations"* in the presence of 26 Military Bishops and several Military Chaplains coming from all over the world. A precis of his talk is below. The full presentation can be found at: <https://www.apostolatmilitaire.com/>

The Admiral began his presentation by outlining the complexity of international missions, stating that in accordance with both the UN Declaration on Human Rights and Catholic Social Teaching, the military are there fundamentally to be *'responsible to protect'*. In looking at 'who' the military are protecting, he told his audience that it was not just the people of their own nation state but also the international order and on peacekeeping missions this includes delivering conditions where peace can be retained, restored and/or maintained. In addition, the military is asked to support civil authorities in activities such as disaster relief and fighting crime. Hence the complexity, with the military undertaking many different types of missions with a number of different agencies and countries.

The Admiral gave further insight by explaining how a military mission is arranged in terms of: Multilateral arrangements; culture; individual countries interpretation of the Definition of Human Rights; legal frameworks especially in regard to the Geneva Convention and state versus non-state conflicts; and politics, which can be particularly sensitive on the topic of detention.

He highlighted that although the Geneva Convention has articles on religious freedom and the fact that prisoners have to be able to express their religion and be assisted in that aspect, even being giving facilities, the convention only relates to a wartime situation. It does not cover missions such as counter drugs or counter-piracy which is not against the state; or where a government requests international assistance to fight against terrorism such as in Afghanistan and Mali as these do not fit in the legal framework of 'declared war'.

The President then introduced his audience to another reference the *Standard for Minimum Requirements for Prisoners (SMR)* produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), originally in 1957 and updated in 2015. These standards cover imprisonment in all circumstances, not just in interstate conflict, but appear not to be widely known about or used and are not legally binding. However, they have been sanctioned by the UN. Like the Geneva Convention, there are articles on religious freedom and facilities to be given to prisoners. The key thing, the Admiral pointed out, is that these standards are applicable to all prisoners and not just prisoners of war: *"So if we have detention arranged according to these two international norms, either the Geneva Convention or the SMR, for imprisonment in our mission documents we have a reference that adheres to UN Standards and Human rights."*

Moving on to the role for Military Chaplains, Admiral Borsboom expounded his belief that the role has to be expanded to include: teaching about ethical dilemmas not just in basic training but also in Staff college and in the mission; advising military leadership on how to deal with difficult human situations in a dignified humanitarian way; counseling; and to act as 'the conscience', *"the moral compass, to be the mirror, the cornerstone of what is morally justifiable"*.

He also advocated that military chaplains should not restrict themselves only to take care of their own military but also the opponent because *"if we talk about the universal love of God, it means also 'love for the enemy'"*. Military chaplains should see where they could assist the opponent whether individual military who are detainees or own staff and leadership. He gave an example of his own experience in Afghanistan where, having sought advice from military chaplains and with the approval of his military commander, he became the first high ranking ISAF official to reach out to the Mullah Council, to clarify whether Islam sanctioned suicide bombings and if not whether they could speak against such action (80 percent of Afghans killed by the Taliban were killed by improvised explosive devices (IED) and vehicle borne IED's).

What does this mean for military chaplains? He declared that whilst they should not be legal experts, they must understand the Geneva Convention and that there are Standard Minimum Rules for detainees in other situations. This means training chaplains in all these standards and learning from others such as prison chaplains.

His key message was: *".. do not limit yourselves ... The need for religiously inspired advice to military leadership is increasing not decreasing."*

He added: *"And the last potential task for the military chaplains is to 'prevent moral disengagement'. These are academic words, but when you are in a military outfit you understand what's happening there and when you talk to people you will know if there is a disengagement from what is normal and what is right and what is just. War and military operations have the tendency not to bring the best out of people because you are in in a strange environment and it's then that military chaplains need to act as the 'cornerstone' to prevent this moral disengagement."*

The President then specifically addressed the Bishops in the audience, many of whom had experience as a military chaplain: *"I think it's your responsibility that your military chaplains get trained well and that they get prepared well and that there is a built-in lessons identified and lessons learned cycle because it's not so, that if you are a good chaplain at home that you automatically can do all these tasks."*

He went on to mention the importance of looking after chaplains on return from their mission explaining the system of decompression used in the Netherlands, with access to psychiatrists and doctors and interviews with the family. In conclusion he reminded his audience that *"for the military chaplains in a mission, it's not only about church services or confession, it's to stimulate an ethical culture. You could also help as I said with rules of engagement not only to construct them but also to implement them."*

End of an Era



By Fr Ian Evans

The Catholic community celebrated its final Mass in what was the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Normandy Barracks Sennelager on Sunday 14th July 2019. Although a sad occasion, the Mass was one of celebration and thanksgiving for all of the graces and favours received by tens of thousands of Service Personnel and their families, as well as the chaplains who served them, over an unbroken service of 74 years from 1945 to 2019. The church, which has been a source of solace, support and worship for such a long time, remains in service as the Garrison Church and has been renamed St Boniface.

As a legacy gift and in acknowledgement of the shared faith, hospitality and friendship that the military community has received from the people of Paderborn, and in recognition of the wonderful medical, surgical and nursing care they have received from St Vincenz for over 75 years, Brigadier Richard Clement (Commander British Forces Germany) presented an Army silver Chalice and Paten, provided by Fr Ian, to the Catholic chapel of the St Vincenz Hospital in Paderborn.





Vinaka Fiji!

By Fr Ian Evans

Nothing quite prepares you for the glorious sight of the Fijian Islands rising majestically from deep turquoise blue seas. Situated 1600 miles from mainland Australia, the deeply forested mountains and valleys are a welcome change to the barren 3-hour seascape. Having flown from Edinburgh on a bitterly cold morning two days previously, the last leg of my flight which departed Auckland finally touched down at Nadi airport and left just a final 45-minute journey south west over the mountains to Suva. Here I was met by Fr Donato Kivi of the Marist College and by Mrs Sofia Wong, wife of SSgt George Wong AGC(SPS). Donato and George had been instrumental in the process of container shipping the contents of closed down garrison churches in Germany and Fr Donato for the dissemination of their contents located at the Marist College, Suva, to the local churches based on need.

After a short drive from Nausori airport I arrived at the College from where I would begin my visit programme to the other islands and to the communities who had already received kit from Germany. My visit also coincided with the arrival of the last container, and thanks to the Brothers, this was disbursed into two storerooms awaiting visits from representatives of parish communities from around the islands.



Fr Denis and the community made me feel very much at home in the College and the visit was celebrated with a formal welcome as a 'Thank You' to all those who facilitated the collection and forwarding of the much anticipated ecclesiastical kit. I had underestimated the extent of the appreciation of the island church communities. In addition to the parishes that were washed away in the cyclone of 2017, the many additional small village churches being built by local communities were essentially devoid of essential furniture and fittings. What had arrived from Germany would find homes among very appreciative and grateful communities and I was fortunate to see this during my visits.

Within the first couple of days of my visit, I had the opportunity to meet with the families of serving Fijian soldiers from Germany, now based in the UK. I was glad to meet up with John Joel known to many of you from the IMP to Lourdes. Sadly, John's brother was ill in hospital at the time and John was home on a compassionate visit. Thankfully his brother is now home and recovering well. While attending several parish celebrations, a number of ex-serving soldiers made themselves known.

Two of the Marist brothers sent pictures of my arrival to their cousins who are serving in Tidworth and Bulford and it wasn't long before those who had been parishioners in Gutersloh and Sennelager were passing on their best wishes and invitations to visit their parents' parishes and homes.

The parish visits began in earnest with an invitation to the Final Profession of Sr Birisita Bibi, cousin of Cpl Bibi whose family have rebased to the UK from Germany. It was a privilege to meet Cpl Bibi's sister and family, his mother and aunties. Attending the celebration was SSgt Wong's auntie, Sr Torika, a lady who has spent a significant number of years on the missions in the Philippines.

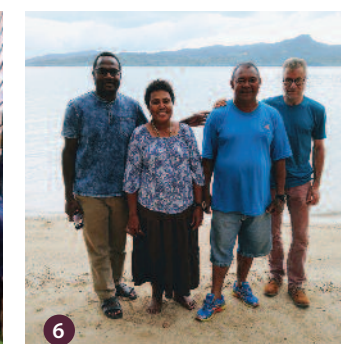
It has been a week of celebrations of all kinds but one of the most significant was that which commemorated the anniversary of ordinations of Frs Polito, Fred and Tito. Together they have given over 80 years of service to Fiji in the Society of Mary.

Starting with lunch in a local hotel, the celebration ended the following day when Fr Fred's family gathered with representatives of the Marist community to celebrate the Mass and party well into the evening at the Marist College.

Over the next 10 days I had the privilege of meeting with parish-ioners and clergy around the three main islands. Accompanied by Fr Denis and seen off at the airport by SSgt George Wong who had arrived home to his family for Christmas, we headed to Savusavu where we were met by Michael and his wife who were to be our gracious hosts for the next few days. Michael is the local Catechist and is in the process of completing the construction of a small village church near his home. Fr Denis and I had the privilege of celebrating Sunday Mass with the community after which there was an extended family celebration at Michael's home.

The next three days were spent visiting some of the local clergy and their parishes in addition to being introduced to some of the most beautiful scenery I have ever seen. The faith of these communities is strong and its expression permeates every facet of daily and family life. It is real, earthy, tangible and very infectious. It is also very encouraging to see it alive and active in the lives of the children.

It wasn't long before Denis and I were on the short ferry trip across the sound to Taveuni where we would stay at the Marist House on the coast and adjacent to one of the earliest Marist foundations in Fiji. As we arrived, Fr Micah was in the process of collecting a number of items of kit from Germany and preparing other pieces for dissemination to local parish churches. Each island has its own distinct characteristics but this one was my favourite. The scenery, the pace of life and the people all contributed to this being the most enjoyable part of my visit.



As is always the case, time passes so quickly and before long it was a case of preparing to go home. The last few days were spent at the college in suva from where I was able to spend time with both LCpl John Joel and SSgt George Wong, both of whom have been friends for a number of years. After much Cava and cold beers over a number of days it was time to say farewell to Fiji and to those who had made my visit such a memorable experience.

My grateful thanks will forever be extended to Frs Donato and Denis, the Marist family throughout the Islands, to Michael and his famiy, the Columban Fathers in Suva, to George and Sophia and to John and to all those whose welcome and hospitality meant so much.

Vinaka Fiji.

- 1: Fr Fabiano collecting much needed kit for his parish church at levuka.
- 2: My welcome to Fiji by the Marist Community
- 3: Sr Barisita's celebratory lunch after her Mass of Final Profession
- 4: Frs Polito, Tito and Fred cutting their Anniversary cake
- 5: A typical family evening meal in Michael's home
- 6: My gracious hosts and Fr Denis Levi SM.



REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2019 – WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL



Placing a cross in the Field of Remembrance

Bishop Hudson with Deacon Skillen RAF, Fr Conroy QHC RN and some of the serving personnel in the hall after Mass

Each year on Remembrance Sunday a Solemn Requiem Mass for the Fallen takes place in Westminster Cathedral which is attended by serving personnel in uniform and veterans proudly wearing their medals. One of the Principal Chaplains is given the honour of delivering the homily and in 2019 it was the turn of the Reverend Deacon Dave Skillen, Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (RAF). The Mass concludes with an Act of Remembrance with Last Post and Reveille sounded by a lone bugler/trumpeter standing high up behind the main altar, its spine-tingling sound echoing throughout the cathedral. After the blessing, the National Anthem is sung before the choir, servers and clergy recess to an organ voluntary and the congregation proceed to the cathedral hall for refreshments and a chat.

The Principal Celebrant is normally the Cathedral Administrator but occasionally either the Cardinal or one of the Auxiliary Bishops of the Diocese of Westminster will preside. On this occasion Bishop Nicholas Hudson, titular Bishop of St Germans with responsibility for the parishes in the central and eastern areas of the Westminster diocese and oversight of the Agency for Evangelisation and the Youth Ministry, presided.

In addition to attending the Remembrance Sunday Mass, a small group from the Royal Navy led by their Principal Chaplain, Fr David Conroy QHC RN, spent the whole of the weekend in London, staying overnight as guests of the Redemptorists in the monastery at Clapham. During their stay they had a guided tour of Westminster Abbey; visited the Field of Remembrance outside the Abbey where a small Remembrance



Fr Conroy with the group outside the Cathedral on Remembrance Sunday

Cross was placed in memory of those who had died over the past year; experienced the tranquility of Tyburn Convent; and were introduced to the Victory Services Club and the Union Jack Club. After the Mass on Sunday morning

the group paid their respects at the Cenotaph and were delighted to fulfil the wishes of tourists wanting to be photographed in the company of sailors in uniform!

MUCH-LOVED FORMER BISHOP OF THE FORCES HAS GRAVE RESTORED

Courtesy of the Catholic Universe

The Bishopric of the Forces has had the grave of a much-loved and respected former Bishop of the Forces restored. Bishop Gerard Tickle served as the Bishop of the Forces from 1963 to 1978. The restored grave in the churchyard of St Winifred's in Neston on the Wirral was blessed by Bishop Paul Mason, the present Bishop of the Forces. Before becoming Bishop of the Forces, Bishop Tickle was Rector of the Venerable English College in Rome. One of his students at that time was Monsignor Christopher Lightbound who now lives in retirement in Neston and was honoured to be present at the blessing. Born in Birkenhead on 2nd November 1909, Bishop Tickle was ordained to the priesthood on 28th October 1934 and served as vice-rector of the English College in Rome, from 1946 to 1952 and rector from 1952 to 1963. He was appointed the Bishop of the Forces and Titular Bishop of Bela on 12th October 1963. He resigned as Bishop of the Forces on 24th April 1978, at the age of 68, but continued as Titular Bishop of Bela until his death. Bishop Tickle died in Ruthin, Clwyd, on 14th September 1994, aged 84.



Photo: At the blessing of the new gravestone are, from left to right: Fr Paul O'Grady, parish priest, Jerome Johnston, nephew of Bishop Tickle, Bishop Paul Mason, Mgr Christopher Lightbound, Deacon Jim Kay.

Photo: Helen Jones, BBC Liverpool



WWI FALLEN HAVE THEIR VICTORY AS FORMER FOES WORK TOGETHER IN PEACE FOR BURIAL

Courtesy of the Catholic Universe



Photo: Fr Patrick O'Driscoll leads the service at Wytschaete Military Cemetery, near Ypres, Belgium, for 13 soldiers who died fighting in Belgium in the First World War.
Photo: Gareth Fuller PA Wire

Hundreds of people gathered to mark the burial of 13 unknown soldiers who died fighting in Belgium in the First World War. The unidentified war dead, all from the UK and Commonwealth nations, were buried side by side with full military honours at Wytschaete Military Cemetery, near Ypres. The finding of the men formed one of the final chapters of the 'Dig Hill 80' project, which discovered the remains of 110 soldiers.

Fr Patrick O'Driscoll, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, conducted the service. He spoke of the symbolism of the red poppy and the need for enduring peace. "We are gathered in fellowship today before God to remember those who have made the supreme sacrifice by the giving of their lives in the service of their country," Fr O'Driscoll said. "We remember and pray for all those who have suffered, and who still suffer, as a consequence of war. Finally, we pray for peace and reconciliation, especially remembering those with the responsibility for the leadership of nations, that conflict may be avoided and peace prevail among all people."

The service was attended by representatives of armed forces from various nations, there to pay their respects to the fallen 13 men. Two of the unknown soldiers, identified as British, were carried to the ceremony by soldiers from the Fusiliers, with Union Jack flags draped over the coffins. The remaining 11 war dead were buried in a third coffin before the service began.

Fr O'Driscoll paid tribute to the ultimate sacrifice made by the 13 soldiers as he addressed the crowd. "We come together today to remember and thank these men for their great sacrifice in fighting and dying together as one. Even though we do not know their names, we remember their humanity and courage and that even in the hell of battle they were there for each other even to death. So, in prayer and celebration, we place these men together in this consecrated and special ground, so that they rest in peace and we learn and make sure humanity endures in its fullness. As we commit the remains of our brothers to the deep, grant them peace and tranquility."

After the burial, shots from the traditional four-gun salute to the fallen echoed across the quiet clearing. The Exhortation was read out, with guests repeating the famous promise: "We will remember them." Music was performed by a joint venture between British and German schoolchildren, to symbolize peace and co-operation. Pupils from Mildenhall College Academy in Bury St Edmunds and St Joseph's College, Ipswich, formed the contribution from the UK.

The service came as a result of the hard work of those at the 'Dig Hill 80' project who excavated Hill 80, the site of a German gun emplacement where many UK and Commonwealth soldiers fell. The project led a 1.1 hectare crowd-funded archaeological excavation, which took place at the former site of Hill 80 in Wytschaete, on land that had been allocated for future housing development. The project excavated 550 metres of trenches and 430 bomb craters, with the remains of 110 soldiers, including British, French, German and South African personnel, discovered. 'Dig Hill 80' was highly publicized at the time, attracting international media attention

and celebrity patronage from comedian Al Murray and support from military historian Dan Snow.

It has not been possible to identify the 13 unknown soldiers who were buried on Thursday 10th October, but at least two are believed to be British. Three Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) headstones will mark their collective final resting places, which will be cared for by the commission in perpetuity. In keeping with burial tradition, the casualties were interred together, ensuring that those who served and died together are buried and commemorated together.

Hill 80 was the site of a windmill before the First World War but became an entrenched German gun position following the capture of the village of

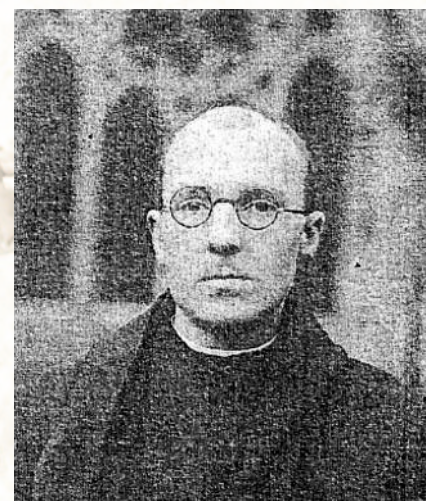
Wytschaete in 1914. The location afforded observational advantage to the Germans as it overlooked the town of Ypres and formed part of the Messines Ridge. The site remained in German hands until the Battle of Messines in June 1917, when it was recaptured. In 1918, Hill 80 was again taken by the Germans during the Battle of the Lys, before finally returning to Allied hands in September 1918.

'Dig Hill 80' head archaeologist Simon Verdegem said: "It is now about a year since the investigation into the soldiers of Hill 80 was completed. Thanks to massive international support from individuals and organisations, enough money was raised through crowdfunding to make a detailed excavation possible. The aim was not only to excavate the trenches but also to recover the soldiers. Now, the British

and German soldiers will finally be given a definitive and dignified resting place along with their comrades. I dare to believe that it gives them peace, knowing that people from all over the world have joined forces to recover their remains. In my opinion, this can count as a symbol of peace and reconciliation."

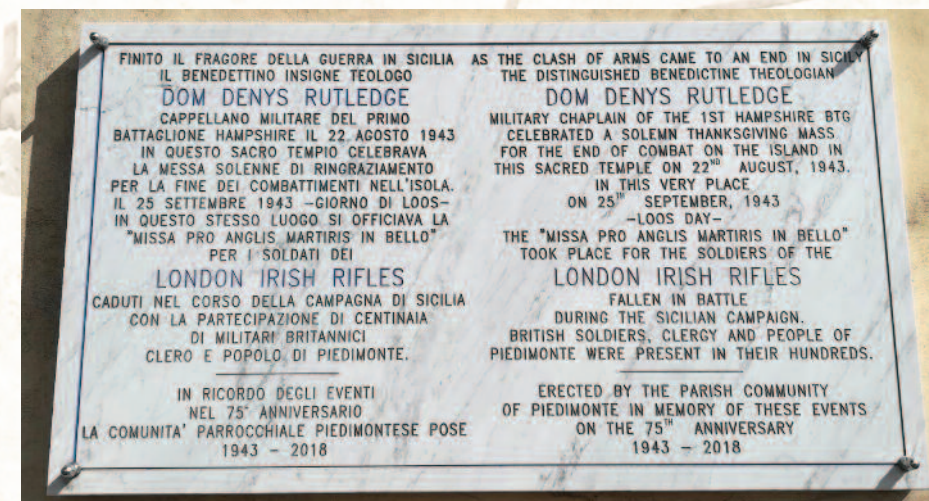
CWGC Director General Victoria Wallace said: "It is always moving and a real privilege to attend reburials. And it's a credit to the team who excavated Hill 80 that they have recovered these men at last, who will now be laid to rest with former comrades and cared for in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It is sad that the men cannot be identified individually, but they will never be forgotten."

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE ERECTED IN SICILY



Dom Denys Rutledge was a Benedictine monk of Fort Augustus Abbey, Scotland. When the Second World War broke out in 1939, he volunteered as an army chaplain and subsequently ministered to Catholics of the 52nd Division during the Dunkirk evacuation.

From August 1941 and throughout 1942, Fr Rutledge served on the island of Malta during the intense Italian and German air raids. In March 1943 he accompanied 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment, 1st Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment, and 2nd Battalion



Devonshire Regiment to North Africa in readiness for the invasion of Sicily.

Fr Rutledge landed on Sicily on 10 July 1943 and ministered during the hard slog up the eastern coast of the island. The Hampshires suffered many casualties and the padre was so busy that he had no clear recollection of events. They covered 140 miles in nine days and it was reported, mistakenly, that he had been killed! On 22 March Fr Rutledge celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving in the church of Piedimonte at the foot of Mount Etna. Three days later a Mass was said for the

fallen of the Irish Rifles. In August 2018, on the 75th anniversary of these events, the grateful parish of Piedimonte erected a commemorative plaque.

Fr Rutledge continued his ministry with the military and took part in the D Day landings. In 1945 he was with the British Army of Liberation in Germany and witnessed the informal unconditional surrender of the German Army at General Dempsey's Tactical HQ on 3 May 1945.



WARRIORS OF THE CROSS

By Neil Sayer, Liverpool Archdiocese Archivist

A roll of honour has been compiled at the Archives, listing all the priests ordained for our Archdiocese (Liverpool) who are known to have served as Chaplains to the Forces in the Second World War. You might like to offer a prayer for our clergy in khaki.

A newspaper report of early 1940 shows that 14 of our priests were then in uniform, some who had already been serving as chaplains, but with several volunteers who came forward immediately war was declared and were then approved by Archbishop Downey for military service. By the end of the war some 55 of our priests are known to have served with the armed forces. Most were in the Royal Army Chaplains' Department, but at least 6 served with the RAF. Given Liverpool's seafaring connection it is perhaps surprising that only 4 are known to have been Navy Chaplains. Almost all of them survived the war, but Rev Gerard Barry, attached to the 8th Battalion Royal Scots, was killed under fire in Belgium in 1944.



Between them, our chaplains must have served in every theatre of the war: Rev Edward Crowley (pictured) underwent gruelling Commando training in the Scottish Highlands before being sent out to the Far East, ministering to the troops in India and Burma. Rev Austin Jackson was with

the Eighth Army in north Africa when he was taken prisoner at Tobruk in 1942. Rev Dan Kelleher, a Kerry man by origin, also followed the "Desert Rats" through the Mediterranean, landing in Sicily and following the fighting through the Italian campaign: when he reached Rome he was granted a special audience with Pope Pius XII. Rev Clifford Murphy had been one of the first to volunteer and found himself being evacuated from Dunkirk in 1940. Much later in the war, a senior chaplain attached to a Corps HQ, he was the first priest to enter the concentration camp at Belsen, not surprisingly a harrowing experience for him. In peacetime Rev George Hickson had been a curate at St Paul's in West Derby. He wrote of how his faith helped him in re-adjusting to work in a parish after the war. He had realised, during sleepless nights in the Burmese jungle, that the war between nations needed 'the weapon of prayer': "We thought of ourselves", he said, "as 'Warriors of the Cross'".

BISHOPRIC WEBSITE

As you may (or indeed may not!) have seen, the Bishopric Website (<http://www.rcbishopricforces.org.uk/>) has been getting a small make over. Whilst only a few small steps so far, the intention is to gather a little more steam so that the website can hopefully be a better resource for the Forces Community, as well as providing a window for others to see something of the ministry of the Bishopric of the Forces.

Please think about what you would like to see on the website and send appropriate material to Fr Pip Smith RChD at: Phillip.Smith168@mod.gov.uk.

Contributions don't have to be lengthy - just a couple of paragraphs about something which has happened, or inviting people to an event which is going to take place, together with a couple of high quality pictures from an iPhone or similar device, would be perfect (please send pictures as an attachment rather than imbedded in the article). As long as there is a Chaplaincy link of some form then it would be perfect for inclusion.

No Ordinary Shepherds - Padres in World War II

In 2017 Dr James Hagerty published *Priests in Uniform: Catholic Chaplains to the British Forces in the First World War*. One reviewer described it as 'a clear, well-researched and authoritative study...with inspiring stories.' Another wrote: 'This moving and vivid account recalls the dedicated ministry of priests who ministered to men engaged in a war without precedent.'



Fr George Forbes OSB MC, a WW2 chaplain

experience. Their ministry was an immediate, practical and difficult apostolate requiring faith, courage and fortitude. Some chaplains were killed; others were wounded. Many were decorated for bravery. Their military service was a profound individual and collective Christian witness.

Bishop Paul Mason wrote: 'This is a thoroughly researched account of devoted priests who fulfilled their vocation in the most unusual and unexpected ways. *No Ordinary Shepherds* is an appropriate tribute to their heroic labours'.

James Hagerty, *No Ordinary Shepherds: Catholic Chaplains to the British Forces in the Second World War* is to be published by Gracewing in Autumn 2020 (<http://www.gracewing.co.uk/>)

In *No Ordinary Shepherds: Catholic Chaplains to the British Forces in the Second World War* James Hagerty again shows how Catholic service personnel, away from home and frequently in life-threatening circumstances, identified with their chaplain – the focus of their faith community in uniform. For individuals and groups, the padre brought the presence of the Church, the comfort of prayer and the power of the sacraments into the midst of war.

Chaplains ministered in an unfamiliar and dangerous world, with all Services in all theatres of war. They encountered men and women, military and civilian, far removed from their usual way of life and familiar social relationships. They were confronted with circumstances, attitudes and personalities beyond their



Dr James Hagerty, the author



Editorial Team

General Editor & RN Rep

Cdr Ian M Crabtree RN, Chaplaincy, Admiralty House North Wing (PP13),
HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, Hants PO1 3LR
Mil: 9380 24232 Civ: (+44)(0)23 9272 4232 Email: ian.crabtree277@mod.gov.uk

Army Rep

Fr David Smith CF (RC), Royal Centre for Defence Medicine, Level 2, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham,
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2WB
Civ: (+44)(0)121 37153103 Email: David.smith229@mod.gov.uk

RAF Rep

Rev Deacon (Sqn Ldr) Neil Galloway MBE RAF, Station Chaplain, RAF Halton,
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 5PG
Tel: Mil: 95237 6734 Civ: (+44)(0)1296 656734 Email: neil.galloway101@mod.gov.uk

Bishopric of the Forces

Bishop Paul Mason, Bishop of the Forces, Wellington House, St Omer Barracks,
Thornhill Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2BG
Tel: Mil: 94222 3234 Civ: (+44)(0)1252 348234 Email: Paul.mason111@mod.gov.uk

Design

Fizzy Print Ltd
Unit 3, Fairway Business Centre
Airport Service Road
Portsmouth
PO3 5NU
Tel: 02392 697739