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## *Army Roman Catholic Newsletter*



### *Welcome*

*From*

*The Revd. Fr. Stephen Sharkey CF  
Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (Army)*



Welcome to Issue 45 of the Army Roman Catholic Newsletter.

As we enter the month of May, we are reminded of its special place within the life of the Church as the month dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Throughout history, May has been a time to reflect on Mary's quiet strength, her steadfast faith, and her unwavering trust in God, qualities that continue to inspire us today. In the context of military life, where uncertainty, challenge, and sacrifice are ever-present, Mary's example offers both comfort and guidance. She understands the weight of service, the reality of hardship, and the importance of hope in difficult times. For our serving soldiers, often called to operate in demanding and unpredictable environments, turning to Mary can be a source of resilience, peace, and renewed purpose. In the current climate, with its many global and personal challenges, her intercession reminds us that we are never alone. May this month be an opportunity for each of us, whether deployed, training, or supporting from home to draw closer to her, seeking her prayers and striving to embody her courage and compassion in our daily lives.

# *Rededication and Remembrance In France & Belgium*

Written by Fr. Terkura Igbe, Chaplain to 1 Mercian, Bulford



## **Across Fields and Memory: Honouring the Fallen**

Serving as a British Army Chaplain offers a profound opportunity to provide pastoral care to our Service Personnel and the wider MOD community. My background in missionary work has been an invaluable compass in this role, helping me navigate the spiritual and emotional needs of those I serve. It often means standing at the intersection of past and present, where stories of sacrifice live not only in words, but in the land itself. Recently, that calling took me across the farmlands of France and Belgium for re-dedication services, where history and memory are quietly etched into the landscape.

Organised by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), our visit took a small group of service personnel to peaceful cemeteries nestled among wide fields, with modern wind turbines turning steadily in the distance. Life flourishes here, yet beneath the soil lies a powerful history. Most significantly, family members of the three soldiers were present throughout the services, bringing a deeply personal and living connection to the acts of remembrance.

## Remembering in France

On Tuesday, 17 March 2026, we gathered at Pargny for the re-dedication of Captain Martin Warren. The cemetery, beside a quiet country road, was framed by budding trees and spring fields - symbols of renewal contrasting with the solemnity of the occasion. Members of Captain Warren's family stood alongside us, their presence adding a profound depth to the moment.

Later, at Joncourt, I presided over the re-dedication service for Lance Corporal Arthur Mantle. Here, vast farmland stretched to the horizon, punctuated by slowly turning wind turbines - a reminder of the peace hard-won through sacrifice. The Mayor of Joncourt, Philippe Ricour spoke of the enduring legacy of Wilfred Owen, who is deeply honoured and remembered in the area because of his war efforts. The presence of Lance Corporal Mantle's great-nephew and his wife served as a poignant reminder of the enduring link between past and present.





### The Silence of Tyne Cot

Crossing into Belgium on Wednesday, 18 March, the scale of remembrance was overwhelming. At Tyne Cot Cemetery, thousands of white headstones stretch across the landscape, surrounded by residential buildings, farmland, and distant wind turbines. Among them were schoolchildren, standing quietly between the graves, as though reflecting on the cost of the peace we often take for granted. Family members of Captain John Russell Pound were also present, standing among the graves in quiet reflection, embodying remembrance across generations.



## Those Who Made a Difference

The ceremonies were defined not only by place, but by the people who shaped them. Danielle Reoubroeks and Eric Compennolle captured beautiful photographs. Rosie Barron and Heather Small of the JCCC organised and supported the visit, while Warrant Officer Class 2 Thomas Edge and Regimental Sergeant Major Mark Nicholls, both of the 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment, delivered readings. RSM Nicholls also presented folded British flags to the families of Captain Warren, Lance Corporal Mantle, and Captain John Russell Pound - a deeply moving tribute for the families present.

Buglers Rifleman Stephen Graham and Rifleman Connor Clare, of the Band and Bugles of The Rifles, carried the *Last Post* and *Reveille* across the fields. Behind the scenes, the gardeners of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission maintain these cemeteries with quiet devotion, preserving their dignity, beauty, and peace. Families, British Embassy representatives, The Royal British Legion, CWGC staff, and local authorities all took part in laying wreaths in tribute.



## Where Memory Lives On

Our journey included a visit to Talbot House, once a sanctuary for soldiers seeking respite away from the front lines, and concluded at the Menin Gate, where the *Last Post* is sounded every evening at 20:00. The notes drifted across the town, carried on the wind. It was the perfect end to a journey defined by memory, honoring the thousands of "unknown" fallen who still watch over Flanders.

In these landscapes, the fields grow, the wind turbines turn, and life moves forward - but memory remains, woven into the land. Through the voices, the people, and the care given to these sacred spaces, the fallen are never forgotten.



## **A silent Hero: Re-dedication of a Memorial to Private Jacob Rivers VC**

As chaplains, we stand alongside the units we serve, offering pastoral support to service personnel, their families, and the wider Ministry of Defence (MOD) community. Our ministry frequently takes us wherever our units operate - on deployments and exercises across the United Kingdom and overseas. Experiences such as these foster a distinctive bond between the chaplain and the personnel with whom they serve.

On occasion, chaplains are also called upon to support the wider MOD family and organisations closely connected to it. On Monday, 1 December 2025, Ms C. A. Clark, Assistant Regimental Secretary at RHQ Mercian in Nottingham, contacted me regarding a re-dedication service for the grave of Jacob Rivers VC. This grave is originally that of Mrs Adeline Rivers, which also serves as a memorial to her son, Private Jacob Rivers, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallantry during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle on 12 March 1915.

During the service, part of the citation for Private Rivers VC, was read:

"For most conspicuous bravery at Neuve Chapelle, on the 12th of March 1915, when he, on his own initiative, crept to within a few yards of a very large number of the enemy who were massed on the flank of an advanced company of his Battalion, and hurled bombs at them.

His action caused the enemy to retire and so relieved the situation. Private Rivers performed a second act of great bravery on the same day, similar to the first-mentioned, again causing the enemy to retire. He was killed on this occasion."

Private Rivers was killed in action during the First World War while serving in France and has no known grave. It was explained that the Sherwood Foresters Regiment funded the headstone for his mother when she died in 1937. In recent months, The Mercian Regiment supported the refurbishment of the memorial, working in partnership with the Victoria Cross Society.

The re-dedication ceremony took place at Nottingham Road Cemetery in Derbyshire on Thursday, 12 March 2026, at 11:00. Members of The Mercian Regiment were joined by civic representatives, members of the Rivers family, local supporters, and other well-wishers who gathered to pay their respects.

The date of the ceremony held particular significance, marking the 111th anniversary of Private Rivers' death. For a soldier who has no known grave, the re-dedication of the headstone bearing his name served as a powerful act of remembrance. It was both a mark of deep respect and a clear affirmation that the courage and sacrifice displayed in service to the nation are neither overlooked nor forgotten.

Over time, the gravestone had become darkened by decades of soot and weathering. Through the dedicated efforts of the Friends of Nottingham Road Cemetery and the Victoria Cross Society, it has now been carefully restored to its original condition. In doing so, the wish of Private Rivers' mother - to have her son remembered - has been honoured once again. His name now stands clearly visible, a lasting reminder of his courage and the price of service.

The re-dedication was therefore not only a moment of reflection but also a reaffirmation of the enduring commitment of the Regiment and the nation to remember those who gave their lives in its service. It stands as a tribute to the courage and selfless commitment exemplified by Private Jacob Rivers VC - qualities that continue to inspire those who serve today and ensure that his sacrifice will never be forgotten.



# *Easter at St. Joan of Arc Catterick Garrison*



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Fr. Kevin Dow & Fr. John Moriarty who are currently based in Catterick were joined by Fr. Stephen Sharkey the Principal Catholic Chaplain of the Army for the Easter Vigil.

Also pictured is Dan with his sponsor, who was Baptised and Anthony, with his sponsor, who made his Confirmation. Please keep Dan and Anthony in your prayers as they continue their faith journey.



# *St. Edward's Chapel, Pirbright*



Recruit Milly was received into the Catholic Church on Easter Sunday at St. Edward's Chapel, Pirbright. Milly, pictured with Fr. David Burke at the Easter Tomb, also made her first Holy Communion on that day. Milly was supported on the day by her fellow ATC recruits who came along to support her. Please keep Milly in your prayers as she continues her journey of faith.

# *St. Patrick's, Tidworth*

Easter services were celebrated at St. Patrick's Church, in Tidworth Garrison by Fr. PJ O'Driscoll.



# *St. Patrick's, Tidworth*



Fr. PJ O'Driscoll receives a token of appreciation from the faith community at St. Patrick's church, Tidworth Garrison as he moves onto pastures new.



Fr. PJ O'Driscoll hands over the key to the church to Fr. Terkura Igbe, the latest custodian of St. Patrick's.

Allan Mallinson from St. Patrick's faith community wrote the following words of farewell to Fr. PJ O'Driscoll:

On Sunday 19th April, the congregation of St. Patrick's, Tidworth Garrison, now relocated temporarily at St. George's, Bulford Garrison, said farewell to Fr. PJ O'Driscoll (and, of course, to his acolyte Alfie, his Staffie) which latterly he served from Aldershot, where he was chaplain of 4th Battalion, Ranger Regiment. The church was built just before the First World War through the efforts and charity of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, who recruited in the counties of Clare, Cork, Kerry and Limerick, and Fr. PJ is "on loan" from the Diocese of Cloyne (Cork). St. Patrick's, which is in urgent need of renovation, closed recently for what is expected to be 18 months' work, in which Fr. PJ has been central to the planning — unofficially titled "Project Gleeson" after Fr. Francis Gleeson, the Munsters' chaplain on the Western Front. At Mass on 19th April the congregation thanked him for his committed ministry and robust preaching of the Faith and presented him with an Easter offering and statuette of St. Patrick, adding that they hoped he would return for the reopening of St. Patrick's next year.



*The  
Chapel  
USAREUR-AF-HQ,  
Weisbaden, Germany*

Fr. Pip Smith, who is currently based with the US Army in Weisbaden, Germany baptised and received LCpl Matt Jones RM into the church on Easter Sunday in the chapel at USAREUR-AF-HQ.



# *HCPT*

## *(Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust)*

HCPT is a United Kingdom based charity which travels with disabled and disadvantaged children and adults on pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, in Lourdes, France. Several of the Bishopric's Military priests take part and provide spiritual, pastoral and emotional support to disabled and disadvantaged children, young people and adult pilgrims. They are key members of groups that include a leader, nurse and volunteer helpers providing a 24/7 presence to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants. They lead and facilitate religious activities. HCPT Masses are renowned for being lively and joyous celebrations. The Chaplains are deeply committed to providing an accessible, joyful and spiritual experience for those with complex needs. Most recently Fr. Kevin Dow (Army) has been in Lourdes as Chaplain with the Armed Forces HCPT Groups 720 and 187 (RAF) along with two Royal Navy Chaplains, Fr. Peter Stoddart and Fr. Phil Carroll.





# *Ex. Camino Harmony*

A letter from Santiago written by Deacon John Power



At the end of March this year, both myself and Fr. PJ joined the Camino De Santiago Pilgrimage as chaplains to the Household Division (AGC and RCAM) on behalf of the Bishopric to the Forces. Both Fr. PJ and I are currently serving with 4 and 1 RANGER Battalions and so had not met any of the 20 or so London District based pilgrims who would be participating in the Ruta De Ingles section of the Camino.

The Camino de Santiago, or Way of St. James, is a vast network of ancient pilgrim routes (we followed the Ruta De Ingles) spanning Europe, all converging at the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain, where tradition holds that the remains of the apostle St. James are buried. Originally the Camino was a major medieval Catholic pilgrimage, it is now walked by hundreds of thousands annually for spiritual growth, personal challenge, hiking, or cultural tourism, retaining its roots with the final destination being a visit to the tomb of St. James and embracing his statue in the Cathedral.

The Ruta De Ingles (Or English Way) carries a deep historic connection for both British and Irish Pilgrims, who would have followed this same route as our ancestors who once sailed to reach Santiago. The total distance of this particular route is 119Km and we completed it over 5 days. The weather can be quite inclement in the Northwest of Spain; however, Mother Nature was on our side, with clear blue skies and temperatures ranging between 18 and 24 degrees.



We began each day gathered at our starting point to listen to a short reflection by myself or Fr. PJ relating to the nature of journeying and pilgrimage. I often used some short poetry by Celtic poet John O'Donoghue from his Book *Anam Cara* (Irish for Soul Friend). I think it would be fair to say that all of our pilgrims bonded in a deep way, different than those bonds that would define us as acquaintances. Each day the walking took us through some outstanding woodlands, rolling hills, stone villages, historic towns and sampling some tasty and authentic Tapas.



It was testament to the openness of the pilgrims that from day one our journey really did embody 'pilgrimage' at its heart. Although Stravas were set and elevation gains spoken about, pilgrims shared their stories and sometimes hopes and fears of their lives. There was wide age spread and life-experiences of the pilgrims and it was a privilege to listen to these as we progressed along our journey. Each day we stopped at a small café for a bite to eat and took time to talk about the fellow pilgrims that we had met. We met the same people each day as we progressed along the pilgrimage. A highlight each day was the celebration of Mass, which we held at the side of a road, next to a stream, in a local park and finally in an alcove of the main square at the Cathedral of St. James in Santiago De Compostella. Each of the pilgrims participated either by reading, receiving Holy Communion or a Blessing.

Our arrival in Santiago was a blessing and a relief. For me personally, it was a relief and tinged with regret. A relief because my feet at this point were heavily bandaged with Zinc Oxide tape and regret that the pilgrimage was nearly over. The day after we arrived in Santiago De Compostella was Palm Sunday and as in some European Countries this most sacred day is celebrated with style, reverence and panache. We witnessed the Faithful lining the streets and waving palm branches as a life-sized statue of Jesus on a donkey was carried through the streets of Santiago before the Blessing of Palms in the main square prior to the celebration of Mass in the Cathedral; it was a fitting finale to the pilgrimage.



At the very beginning of our pilgrimage, I said to the pilgrims that if we remain open to change, we will finish this journey a different person than we began. On a personal level, I did, I was physically a little lighter than I started, I had some time alone to reflect and to rest and I deepened by friendship with my fellow Christian and Catholic brother, Fr. PJ and that is a *Grace* that I will take away from the Camino. Buen Camino!



# *Ex. Camino Harmony*

Written by Musn. Pete Lewis, HDiv. Bands

## Camino Inglés, The English Way!

On the 23rd of March, a group of 20 pilgrims from; The Royal Corps of Army Music, The Adjutant General's Corps and Chaplains from the Ranger Regiment, set off from London Gatwick airport to begin their journey to Santiago de Compostella, the resting place of St. James the Apostle. The range of Regiments gave individuals the opportunity to spend time in communion and grow with people they had not met before. The pilgrimage was inspired by Sgt Needham's visit to Santiago with her mother a few years before.



The pilgrimage consisted of 5 days of walking, via the Camino Inglés, covering 112km of challenging terrain. We started in the port city of Ferrol; a location chosen for its British military connections. The Camino Inglese is a route historically used by pilgrims journeying from Britain and Scandinavia as they could arrive via ship on the northern coast of Spain. From there, they could begin their journey to Santiago de Compostella, a sacred destination journeyed to since the 10th century.

## Day 1: Ferrol to Cabanas; 16.7 miles



We began! A coastal walk, around the industrial buildings of Ferrol to Neda and on to Pontedeume. First connections were made, stories began to be shared, and laughter started as this varied group of Catholics, Christians and people of no faith started their pilgrimage together. Accompanied by Fr. PJ O'Driscoll and Deacon John Power, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to take part in the Sacraments of Mass and Reconciliation throughout the week. Our first Mass of the Pilgrimage as a whole group was on the side of the Inglés path, next to a mountainous water fountain. Our day ended at the beachside hotel where pilgrims could relax their muscles in the cooling Galician Sea.

## Day 2: Cabanas to Betanzos; 12.9 miles



Day 2 pushed us with steep hills and drizzly skies on the way to Betanzos as the true physical intensity of our journey began to be apparent. Once again, we stopped off for Mass, this time making use of some of the musical talent on the trip; Major Mason sung the Magnificat to the Scottish melody of Mountain Thyme for the feast of the Annunciation. Britons immigrated to the Galician region of northern Spain, bringing with them their Celtic musical traditions, very similar to what we associate with the traditional sounds of the British Isles today. This made the choice of Mountain Thyme seem even more fitting. Our accommodation for the night was in the historic town of Betanzos; marked by medieval town walls, grand Churches and one of the best-preserved old quarters in Galicia.

## Day 3: Betanzos to Hospital de Bruma/Meson 15.1 miles

This was the most intense day of the trip as the terrain was plagued with relentless climbing and descents. Despite this, the emergence of the beautiful rural landscapes and quiet solitude, which many of us had hoped to experience, helped focus our minds away from the struggle. By this point, characters began to reveal themselves and friendships began to form. It became more obvious who the fitter individuals among the group were, whilst always allowing sufficient time for everyone else to catch up.

Our evening meal for the night was my personal favorite of the week; soup followed by a local fish dish and the tastiest huge slice of cheesecake for dessert. All of this was accompanied by some local wine and Estrella Galicia, the perfect remedy for a long day on our feet.



## Day 4: Hospital de Bruma/Meson to Siquiero 15.5 miles

Day 4 offered contrast; a more gentle, mostly downhill journey through forests and villages towards Sigüeiro, highly needed after yesterday's stint! Each day of our pilgrimage, the Chaplains invited all to join in with the celebration of Mass, regardless of their Christian background. From the side of the road, in picnic areas or in spare rooms, Mass was celebrated, stripped of its Liturgical beauties. This simplicity is reminiscent of Mass in the early Christian Church, appropriate for a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James the Apostle. It was a privilege to be joined in Mass by two pilgrims from Manchester, we had met on route. The musicians once again led the way with singing of Gregorian chant and melodies played on the tin whistle.



## Day 5 Siquiero to Santiago de Compostela 9.8 miles



Our final stretch of the walk consisted of stunning views, a few final climbs, and then that unforgettable moment of arriving at the Plaza del Obradoiro next to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Mass was celebrated in a quiet corner of the Cathedral grounds where we concluded with group singing of "One more step along the world I go". Individuals had the opportunity to visit the relics of St. James, beneath the High Altar; a simple, understated silver case with images of Saints engraved into the metal. After this, pilgrims could hug their arms around St. James' statue in the camarín, a ritual known as 'embracing Santiago'.

A final stamp in everyone's pilgrim passport, rewarded individuals with their Compostela certification. Written in Latin and the Galician vernacular, these illuminated certificates are proof of the physical sacrifice of each pilgrim on their journey to St. James' tomb and evidence for the plenary indulgences available to those who have faithfully met the conditions. After we finally arrived at our last hotel, many who were tired sought rest and others massages to help with the physical fatigue. Meanwhile, Fr. O'Driscoll insisted on hitting the treadmill, for a couple of hours, to reach his weekly running goals, crazy!



## Day 6: Palm Sunday



We had a day to explore the sights of Santiago. We started off by witnessing a Palm Sunday procession from Igrexa de San Francisco to the Cathedral. For the marching musicians among us, it was fascinating to witness the use of a brass band and uniforms to mark such an occasion, reminiscent of a funeral march. This was followed by Solemn Mass at Santiago Cathedral; liturgically beautiful although Sunday worship became lead by the architectural and musical beauty for those unable to navigate their way through the Passion in Spanish.

We shared a final meal together at lunch with large portions of paella to share, accompanied by toasts and final moments of appreciation.

The evening was finished with a roof top tour of the Cathedral; an opportunity to witness the panoramic views of the buildings which make up the city of Santiago. On a personal note, this week was one of the highlights of my career in the Army, so far, and it was a privilege to be able to share with this group of individuals.

Buen Camino!



# *Cathedral Church of St. Michael & St. George, Aldershot*

## *Ministry in Motion*

On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, soldiers from 4 Rangers and 1 RLC assisted Bishop Paul Mason, Fr. Nick Gosnell and Fr. PJ O'Driscoll who celebrated Mass in the Cathedral of the Forces.



# *The Restoration of the Banner Depicting St. George and the Dragon*

Written by Mrs Louise Morgan-Jones



The banner was originally commissioned from Watts & Co of London in 1921 for St. George's church (as St. Michael & St. George was then known). There is an entry in the Church Records that shows that it was first blessed on Easter Day 1921 and a black and white photo showing it hanging in the sanctuary.

The photographs show that by 2023 the banner had deteriorated significantly. Fabrics had rotted and faded, trims had discoloured and the goldwork had become detached across the whole piece.



Initially I agreed to fix down all the goldwork but as the project progressed, I realised that a lot more work would be required in order to bring the banner back to life. The processes involved included:

- Fixing down (couching) all the loose gold on the figure, the dragon and the lettering.
- Replacing fabric on the tunic, shield and flag and dyeing it with organic dyes where necessary to colour match the original.
- Applying conservation net to the blue velvet of the cloak to prevent further deterioration.
- Adding texture to the plumes of the helmet and defining the face.
- Embroidering an exact copy of the mound on which St. George stands as the original had rotted completely.
- Lifting the lettering off the original red velvet fabric that had faded and lost its pile and attaching it to the new background and adding 2 layers of silk gimp around each letter.
- Lifting the figure from the original cream background which had discoloured and attaching it to the new background and adding a layer of silk gimp all around.
- Finally, assembly of all the parts into a finished banner.

I started the work in June 2023 and finally finished in April 2026 having spent a total of 200 hours on the project.



# *Shepherds in Uniform*

Throughout history, Catholic chaplains have stood beside soldiers in moments of courage, hardship, and sacrifice. The history of the armed forces is not only a story of battles and campaigns, but also of quiet ministry among those who served. Catholic chaplains have long provided the sacraments, counsel, and presence of the Church in the most demanding circumstances. Among these figures stands Robert Brindle, Bishop of Nottingham, remembered as the most decorated Catholic chaplain to have served in the British Army. In this feature, Dr. James Hagerty shares insights and research on chaplains from earlier generations whose witness continues to inspire today.



## **Padre to Prelate**

### **The Military Career of Bishop Robert Brindle DSO**

**Written by Dr. James Hagerty**

On his death, on 27 June 1916, Robert Brindle, Bishop of Nottingham, was the most decorated Catholic chaplain to have served in the British Army. Born in Liverpool in 1837, ordained at the English College, Lisbon, in 1862 for the Diocese of Plymouth, and commissioned Chaplain to the Forces in 1874, he became Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Westminster after retirement from the army in 1899. In 1901 he was translated to the See of Nottingham.

His first military appointment was to Woolwich Garrison followed by five years' service in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In 1882, he accompanied the Royal Irish Regiment with an expeditionary force in the campaign against 'Urabi Pasha in Egypt but was not present at the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir having been struck down with cholera. He accompanied the force sent to relieve General Gordon in Khartoum and on this expedition his military reputation was made.

The River Nile was low and cataracts were exposed, causing great difficulty for troops dragging boats with supplies upstream. Sir Garnet Wolseley offered a £10 prize to the battalion which arrived first with stores intact. Sir Evelyn Wood recalled that on Christmas Day 1884: 'I saw the little flotilla of boats flying the Irish flag toiling up the river. Fr Brindle got out when he pulled up to us, hot, tired, irritable, with his hands blistered and perspiration running down his face...he had been pulling the 'stroke or' in order 'to encourage them.' The battalion was the quickest over the 300-mile journey and won the prize.

Having ascertained that Khartoum had fallen, and after the Battle of Metemneh, Wolseley's column retired across the desert. The Royal Irish were sent to reinforce the column and Fr Brindle, foregoing the use of a camel, marched with his men. When they arrived at the camp near Korti, Brindle was seen 'marching with the regiment, but the soles of his boots were gone, and rags rolled about his feet replaced them'. Another Catholic padre, Fr. Charles Keatinge, wrote about the impression given by Fr. Brindle and the influence that he had upon the men.

One thing about which all agree is that Fr. Brindle did his duty nobly; he was the only chaplain of any religion to cross the desert to Metemneh, and he marched the whole way "ever ready...to carry a man's rifle or give away a drink from his water bottle".

Throughout all the weary months at Kurot, Fr. Keatinge continued, Fr. Brindle allowed no grumbling. The regiment then participated in the successful Battle of Ginnis against the Dervishes on 30 December 1885, the last engagement in which British soldiers fought in red uniforms. Brindle was also present and again enhanced his reputation. In the history of the Royal Irish Regiment, it was recorded that 'his genial personality, his devotion to duty, his coolness in danger, his indifference to hardship, combined to give him a remarkable influence over the men, which he exerted invariably in the interest of the service'. An observer recorded that 'According to my experience, everyone that met him appreciated him. He was a wonderful man for making friends, and Lord Wolseley had a very high opinion of him'. Fr. Brindle received the War Medal with four clasps for his service with the Nile Expedition of 1884.

From 1886 until 1896 he was stationed at Colchester and Aldershot when he was deployed with Kitchener's Expedition sent to re-conquer the Sudan. On his arrival in Egypt, Rev Owen S. Watkins, Wesleyan Chaplain to the Forces and attached to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, met up with other chaplains. He wrote: "I made acquaintance with my three brother chaplains...good men all, first and chief amongst them being that man beloved of all ranks, Fr Brindle of the Roman Catholic Church. No other man in the Chaplains' Department has seen so much service as he - no Nile campaign, it is said, is complete without Fr. Brindle; and though over sixty years of age, he marches as gaily and carries himself as straight as any boy".

Fr. Brindle again distinguished himself by his ministrations to troops of all denominations and his brave conduct. When cholera struck the camp at Sarras he worked tirelessly among the victims. The artist Richard Caton Woodville recalled the 'undaunted spirit' of Fr. Brindle, his devotion to the troops and their response:

All the Tommies loved him. It was he who carried the Tommies out of their quarters in his arms, placed them in the ambulance to convey them to the hospital when nobody else would come near them, as the cholera was raging and the men were dying like flies, and even many of the doctors themselves had died.

At Atbara, Fr. Brindle bravely crossed the desert to minister to a dying Catholic soldier in another camp ten miles away. He walked at night, unarmed, across the perilous and enemy-infested desert of El Teb, administered the last rites to the dying soldier and stayed with him until the end. Then he tramped back across the desert to his own camp in time to say Mass next morning.

On Good Friday, 8 April 1898, Fr. Brindle took part in the Battle of Atbara against the Mahdist army and was involved in the successful Battle of Omdurman on 2 September 1898 when it was noted that 'the heroic priest was in the fighting line'. At the subsequent memorial service for General Gordon, Fr. Brindle was one of four officiating chaplains - Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and Presbyterian.

After the British and Egyptian flags had been run up on the roof of the palace there followed a dead hush while the four military chaplains came slowly forward and ranged themselves with their backs to the palace, just before Kitchener. The Presbyterian read the fifteenth psalm; the Anglican led the rustling whisper of the Lord's Prayer. Snow-haired Father Brindle, best beloved of priests, laid his helmet at his feet and read a memorial prayer bare headed in the sun.

The prayer was later printed and distributed among the troops. Writing to Lord Roberts on the effectiveness of chaplains during the Second Boer War (1899-1902), Winston Churchill recalled '... the venerable figure and noble character of Father Brindle in the River War...'

For his service with the Khartoum Expedition of 1896-1898 Brindle received the campaign medal with three clasps. He was also awarded the Turkish Order of the Medjidie with three clasps, the Osmanieh with four clasps, and the Khedive's Bronze Star. In November 1898 he was gazetted Companion of the Distinguished Service Order: 'Rev. Robert Brindle, Chaplain to the Forces, 1<sup>st</sup> Class, in recognition of his services in Egypt and the Sudan, including the Battles of Atbara and Khartoum'. The insignia were presented to Brindle by the Officer Commanding in Egypt at a full-dress parade of the Cairo Garrison on 20 December 1898. In the following year Brindle retired from the army, was appointed Auxiliary Bishop in Westminster, and travelled from Egypt to Rome in March for his episcopal ordination as titular Bishop of Hermopolis but while in Rome his DSO was stolen and he had to purchase another. The replacement was presented to him by Queen Victoria on 11 May 1899.

Fr. Brindle retired from the army, much decorated and with a *Good Service Pension*. It has been suggested that he was nominated for a *Commander of the Bath*, but it was not permitted to bestow this honour upon a chaplain. Lord Kitchener maintained contact with Brindle and wrote: 'I often look back to the old Sudan days when you used to lead the troops across the desert and wish those days back again. I was delighted to get your letter, and to feel that you still have a kindly remembrance of your old friend.' Lord Wolseley kept a picture of Fr. Brindle on his mantelpiece and described him as 'one of the finest soldiers in the British Army.'

Fr. Brindle was one of five nineteenth-century Catholic army chaplains to be consecrated as bishops. Fr. Alexander MacDonnell became Bishop of Kingston, Ontario; Fr. John Butt became Bishop of Southwark; Mgr. John Vertue became Bishop of Portsmouth; and Fr. James Bellord became Vicar Apostolic of Gibraltar. None, however, matched Fr. Brindle's experience, decorations or reputation. He was buried, with full military honours, in the crypt of St Barnabas Cathedral, Nottingham.

### **Editor's Note:**

There is a quiet but striking symmetry linking two men of faith and service. Fr. Brindle passed away on 27 June 1916 at Mount St Mary's College, Spinkhill, the very place where the portrait of Fr. Edmund Wurtzburg was displayed. Fr. Edmund himself now rests in the churchyard of the Immaculate Conception at Spinkhill in North-East Derbyshire.

That both men were decorated army chaplains adds a deeper resonance to this connection. In life, they served in the same dual vocation of priesthood and military ministry; in death, their stories converge at Spinkhill, one in memory upon the wall, the other in the ground nearby, and the other in the very place of his passing. It is a poignant reminder of shared sacrifice, quiet heroism, and the enduring ties that bind their legacies together.

**FR. DENIS SHEAHAN**  
**LETTERS FROM THE CRIMEA**

Written by Dr. James Hagerty

In St. Mary's Church, Clapham, is a white marble memorial tablet lined with a black border. On the tablet is the inscription:

*To the Revd. Denis Sheahan, Miss: Ap: as a record of gratitude for leaving this mission, where he was beloved and respected, to labour and die amongst their comrades in the Crimea, the soldiers of H.M. 88th Regiment (Connaught Rangers) erected this tablet. R.I.P.*

Fr. Sheahan had been Missioner Apostolic in charge of St. Mary's living with Redemptorist priests who were undertaking missionary work in the Diocese of Southwark. The memorial was the second one erected by the Connaught Rangers because they had already placed one above Fr. Sheahan's grave in the Light Division Cemetery, near Sebastopol in the Crimea.

The Crimean War, between Russia and Great Britain, France and their allies, broke out in March 1854 and at the war's end in 1856 over 111,000 British soldiers had been deployed to the Crimea. There were 30,000 Irishmen in British and Irish regiments and many would be Catholics and Bishop Thomas Grant of Southwark, the Catholic Hierarchy's spokesman on chaplaincy matters, was asked by the War Office to provide priests to minister to Catholic soldiers. Twenty-two priests volunteered: Frs. Joseph Woollett SJ, Gerrard Strickland SJ, William Ronan SJ, Patrick Duffy SJ, Michael Cuffe, John Wheble, Michael Canty, Henry Clark, Denis Sheahan, John Bagshawe, Thomas Unsworth, John Butt, Joseph McSweeney, James Doyle, James Sheil, Joseph Mahé, Augustine Maguire, Joseph O'Dwyer, Thomas Molony, John Pauline, Francis O'Callaghan, and the Vincentian Michael Gleeson. Forty chaplains from Anglican and other Christian denominations also served.

In the Crimea, the inexperienced chaplains travelled long distances between the front before Sebastopol and army hospitals at Scutari and Kulali on the Bosphorus. Men died of wounds and sickness in field hospitals and at the forward-base of Balaclava, but many were also dying in great numbers in base-hospitals where they were shipped for medical attention unavailable in field-hospitals. The deathrate on the hospital-ships transporting casualties from the Crimea was equally high and chaplains were fully occupied saying Mass, tending cholera victims and the wounded, and burying the dead.

Fr. Wheble (Archdiocese of Westminster) and Fr. Sheahan (Diocese of Southwark) were the first priests to go the Crimea and from Scutari Fr. Sheahan wrote, in April 1854, that he was 'leading a soldier's life'. As the war progressed, however, and more chaplains arrived his letters to Bishop Grant took on a more objective view of the padres' field organization. In his first letter, dated 1 December 1854, he raised the issue of Catholic padres having no Senior Chaplain. The deployment of Catholic chaplains depended on the military and the informal authority of the Catholic chaplain who had been the longest in a given area. Fr. Sheahan suggested that a priest should be appointed by military and ecclesiastical authorities at home and be recognised by all chaplains at bases and the front.

In his second letter, dated 18 January 1855, after he had endured six more weeks of a harsh Crimean winter when more men died of sickness or exposure than were killed in action or died of wounds, Fr. Sheahan informed the bishop of his intention to resign from the army on account of ill-health and asked permission to recuperate with his family in Cork for as long as he could be spared from the diocese. However, within days he informed Bishop Grant that he changed his mind. In a letter from Scutari dated 25 January 1855, he informed the bishop that only two chaplains were with the army at the front and the rest were at base-hospitals. One of these, Fr. Sheahan opined, was totally unsuitable for the hardships of the Crimea and for the hospital at Scutari; another seemed to be disqualified for the Crimea 'by rheumatic pains and on other grounds'; and yet another was 'a rough diamond' who did not get on with the officers'. Fr. Moloney, however, 'who enjoys robust health and who is a somewhat more presentable person', asked to go to the front. Eventually, Fr. Moloney did not leave his work at Scutari. He had not seen how bad conditions were at the front, but he saw how badly he was needed at Scutari.

Fr. Sheahan specified a chaplain's obligations and stressed again the need for a Senior Chaplain: 'no one ought to join the expedition who is not prepared for field and hospital duty, just as his services are required' and he urged the bishop to appoint 'one at the head of our number, who would make it his business to watch over the health of those under him and who had adequate authority, might save lives, and would undoubtedly prevent from occurring the wretched and disheartening spectacle of soldiers abandoned to perdition, because either of the crotchets or want of spirit of those who ought to take the place of the priests who have become knocked-up. I conceive I am doing right—doing what will meet with your lordship's approval and God's blessing—in going back and giving, if need be, my strength and life for the poor soldier. It will be hard if they do not knock three or four weeks' work out of me, and by the end of another month someone else may have come to the rescue. It shall not be said that there is no one to take care of the Catholic soldier.' He concluded: 'So important do I consider it that another priest should at once go to the Crimea, that if it should not be consistent with your wishes, I will without hesitation withdraw my application for leave of absence to proceed to England and return to my work...' Fr. Sheahan went back to the front and died there of fever on 10 March, 1855. He was 31 years of age.

Six Catholic chaplains and two nursing Sisters of Mercy, who also accompanied the troops, died in the Crimea: Frs. John Wheble, Denis Sheahan (Connaught Rangers), Michael Canty, James Sheil (2<sup>nd</sup> Division), James Doyle, Gerard Strickland SJ (4<sup>th</sup> Division) and Sisters Mary Elizabeth Butler and Winifred Sprey. The Sisters left a full account of the nuns' funerals and the tributes of respect and gratitude paid by the men for whom they had given their lives. Sister Mary Aloysius, incidentally, described Fr. Unsworth as 'the senior chaplain in the Crimea'.

Fr. Sheahan highlighted issues which re-appeared throughout the nineteenth century: military chaplaincy as a specialised ministry; Catholic chaplains should be commissioned with full pay, authority and ranks; and Catholic chaplains should be subservient to military authority but not to that of chaplains of another denomination. In 1858 the first Catholic chaplains were commissioned with ranks, full pay and emoluments. They were answerable in the military to army officers and the Adjutant General, and in ecclesiastical matters to the Bishop of Southwark. They were members of the Army Chaplains' Department and designated 'Chaplain to the Forces'.

Fr. Sheahan's letters reveal a strong character devoted to duty, a keen practical intelligence, and an admiration for the Catholic soldier. Like other padres, he must have been a brave man, or he could not

have held his own with the Connaught Rangers in battle. He wrote to Bishop Grant when telling of his intention to stay in the Crimea: 'I conceive I am doing right - doing what will meet with your lordship's approval and God's blessing - in going back, and giving, if need be, my strength and life for the poor soldier.' Fr. Sheahan's own words might serve as his epitaph. The Connaught Rangers' memorial in Clapham and the Crimea and the inscriptions on them both preserve his memory and give an indication of the soldiers' appreciation of his ministry.

The Catholic chaplains were awarded the Crimean Medal, six of them posthumously including Fr. Sheahan. The twelve chaplains who died in the Crimea - six Anglican and six Catholic - are commemorated in the Royal Garrison Church, Portsmouth.

(below) The memorial to Fr Sheahan erected in the Crimea by the Connaught Rangers.



The Crimean War medal of Fr. Joseph O'Dwyer.  
(courtesy of Fr. Tim Bywater)



## SAVE A STORY OF FAITH & SERVICE

### ***Help Restore a Rare Boer War Portrait***

At the heart of this painting is a Roman Catholic Army chaplain who served with distinction during the Boer War, a quiet but powerful witness to faith, duty, and compassion amid conflict. Decorated for his service, he represents the often-unseen spiritual courage that sustained soldiers on the battlefield.

Time, however, has taken its toll.

Cracking across the surface, dulled pigments, and a weakening canvas now threaten to erase irreplaceable details; not only of the sitter's likeness, but of the story he carries. Without professional conservation, this extraordinary work risks being lost forever.

### **Why Restoration Matters**

Your support will allow specialist conservators to:

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  - Repair surface cracking
- Revive the original depth, colour, and presence
- Preserve this historic tribute for future generations

This is more than a painting. It is a testament to service, sacrifice, and moral courage in wartime.

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Every contribution, large or small, brings this portrait closer to renewal.  
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HOME  
MARY  
FEAST  
DEATH  
VIRGIN  
ANGELS

SKY  
LOVE  
LILIES  
QUEEN  
MOTHER  
ASSUMPTION

BODY  
TOMB  
EMPTY  
HEAVEN  
REWARD  
ETERNITY

# *St Wilfrid's Garrison Church Strensall, York*



*Saturday 27th June 2026 at 14:00*

Bishop Paul will celebrate a Mass to welcome Our Lady of Victories' Icon to the North on her inaugural tour.

The Icon is based at Strensall until the Autumn, in support of Op INTERBOW.

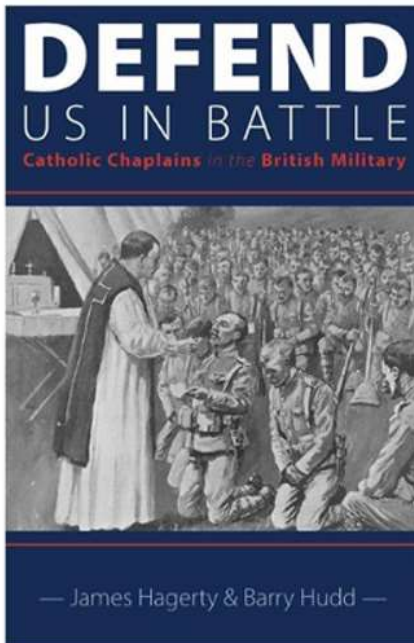
Music for the Mass will be provided by the York-based Rudgate Singers who celebrate the 30th year of their foundation.

All are welcome.

Further information available from Fr David Smith  
[917smith@armymail.mod.uk](mailto:917smith@armymail.mod.uk)



# Literature of Interest



Chaplains have served and continue to serve all branches of the British armed forces. The size and organization of the military and the nature of warfare has been transformed, but the chaplain's vocation remains unchanged.

This book traces the growth and development of Catholic chaplaincy to British armed forces from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century.

*Defend Us In Battle* describes the ministry of priests who over the centuries and across the world have voluntarily provided Catholic service personnel with the solace of religion far away from home and frequently in danger. There emerges a powerful narrative of priestly service not always known or recognized by those outside the military.



As a member of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department Rev Peter Howson served in Germany during the period 1977 to 1997.

More details are at:

[Britain and the German Churches, 1945-1950 - Boydell and Brewer](#)



## ORDER ONLINE

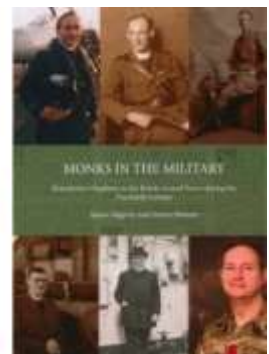
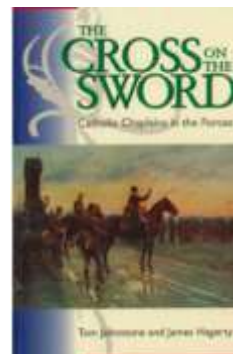
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Dr James Hagerty has written and co-written numerous books on Catholic history. His most recent research has been into Catholic chaplaincy within the British Armed Forces. You can find more information regarding his publications at:

<https://www.jameshagerty.co.uk/books/>



## CATHOLIC MILITARY ASSOCIATION

The Catholic Military Association (CMA) is the official network for Defence Catholics. We support Catholics in the UK Armed Forces and have membership for serving personnel, veterans and other supporters. As a lay association of the faithful and registered charity (1205467) we cooperate to advance the faith across HM Forces. We work to inspire one-another in the Faith, growing through prayer and friendship. Find us at: [catholicmilitaryassociation.org.uk](http://catholicmilitaryassociation.org.uk) and join for free to be included in our events and activities.

# Vocations

## Ready to Serve?

If you believe God may be calling you to this extraordinary form of ministry, we encourage you to contact the Vocations Director for the Bishporic for a conversation. Explore the possibility of serving both the Church and our armed forces with faith, courage, and compassion.

## Vocations Director:

*Fr Kevin Dow CF*

email: [Kevin.Dow101@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Kevin.Dow101@mod.gov.uk)

For further information on chaplaincy in the different services please see:

[www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/roles/chaplain](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/roles/chaplain)

[www.jobs.army.mod.uk/roles/royal-army-chaplains-department/chaplain/](http://www.jobs.army.mod.uk/roles/royal-army-chaplains-department/chaplain/)

[www.recruitment.raf.mod.uk/roles/roles-finder/chaplaincy/chaplain](http://www.recruitment.raf.mod.uk/roles/roles-finder/chaplaincy/chaplain)

The Bishporic of the Forces exists to provide for the spiritual, sacramental and pastoral well-being of Catholic servicemen and women, and their families, within the British Armed Forces. Unlike any other diocese, the Bishporic of the Forces has no geographical boundaries but encompasses anywhere in the world that United Kingdom military personnel are serving or deployed.

ANSWERING THE  
CALL:  
BECOME A  
CATHOLIC  
MILITARY  
CHAPLAIN



Roman Catholic  
Bishporic  
Of The Forces



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.

# Lay Chaplaincy at Waterways

## Why Consider Waterways Chaplaincy as a Lay Chaplain?

Military life trains people to look out for others. Whether in barracks, on exercise or deployed, many of us recognise when someone is struggling, isolated or just needs a decent conversation. Waterways chaplaincy is a simple, practical way of using those instincts beyond work, without needing to be an expert or have all the answers.

Waterways lay chaplains spend time alongside people who live and work on canals and rivers boat owners, marina staff and volunteers. The role is mostly about being present: listening, checking in, and offering support when life feels heavy. There is no script and no pressure to "fix" anything. For anyone who has worked in welfare, leadership or supported others in the Military, this will feel familiar.

There are real benefits. It's a chance to develop listening and people skills in a very different setting, build trust with individuals who may not engage with formal services, and gain experience working with people from all backgrounds. It can also be a healthy contrast to the pace and structure of military life, while still feeling purposeful.

That said, it is not for everyone. The work is quiet and often unseen. There is no rank, no quick wins and no clear end state. The time commitment is a minimum of 3-4 hour a week, which needs to be managed sensibly alongside service commitments and approval from your Chain of Command.

Lay chaplains also need a strong sense of their own faith, as the role involves supporting others spiritually while respecting a wide range of beliefs. Comfort with working independently and knowing when to signpost is essential.

For serving personnel who value people, conversations and quiet impact and who are grounded in their faith, Waterways chaplaincy can be a rewarding way to give something back while still fully serving. It is not about preaching; it is about being human, consistent and trustworthy.

Full training provided.

Interested in finding out more? Get in touch with Corinna at [corinnawwc@merciamarina.com](mailto:corinnawwc@merciamarina.com).





# *67<sup>th</sup> International Military Pilgrimage Lourdes 2027*



The UK Contingent will depart for the International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2027, returning Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2027.

Serving personnel may obtain details from their Military Chaplain or from the Pilgrimage Organiser:  
**Father Nick Gosnell**, Cathedral of St. Michael and St. George, Queens Avenue, Aldershot, Hampshire  
GU11 2BY. Tel: **01252 315042**

The Travel agents are Tangney Tours, Pilgrim House, Station Road, Borough Green, Kent TN15 8AF.  
Tel: 01732 886666

## *Bishopric of The Forces Retreats*



Are you in need of stillness and sanctuary?

A one-day retreat centered on the theme of Spiritual Resilience will be held for Armed Forces personnel and MOD Civil Servants seeking a moment of reflection, renewal and reconnection. On **23rd June at St. Michael & St. George, Aldershot** and on **25<sup>th</sup> June at St. Joan of Arc Church, Catterick Garrison**. These retreats offer a valuable opportunity to pause from the demands of service life and explore the deeper dimensions of personal strength through guided prayer, quiet contemplation and group discussion. Rooted in the Christian tradition yet open to all levels of faith and belief, the day will focus on nurturing the spiritual pillar of the force resilience tetrad, alongside physical, psychological and social wellbeing.

Participants will be invited to consider how spiritual resilience can support them in times of challenge, uncertainty and transition. Through a blend of reflective exercises, scriptural insights and shared experiences, the retreat aims to foster inner peace, moral clarity and a renewed sense of purpose. Whether you are new to the idea of retreat or returning for a fresh encounter, this day promises a safe and welcoming space to deepen your faith journey and strengthen your spiritual core.

For further information please contact: [armyrcpaa21@gmail.com](mailto:armyrcpaa21@gmail.com)

**You are invited to  
take part in a  
Walking Pilgrimage  
to Assisi**

**10 - 17  
October  
2026**



Join with the Rt Rev Paul Mason, Roman Catholic Bishop of the Forces, and personnel from the Whole Force, to commemorate the 800th Anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi. We will walk 105 km of the Via di Francesco or Way of St Francis. Starting at the Umbrian town of Terni and finishing at the Shrine of St Francis in Assisi.

To express your interest to take part  
and for further information contact:  
[jeremy.wynne109@mod.gov.uk](mailto:jeremy.wynne109@mod.gov.uk)



From: The Reverend (Wing Commander) David E Skillen MA QTS BA (Hons) RAF



Principal Roman Catholic  
Chaplain (RAF)

The Chaplaincy Centre  
RAF Cosford  
Wolverhampton  
WV7 3EX

Email: [david\\_skillen100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:david_skillen100@mod.gov.uk)

19 Mar 26

### BISHOPRIC OF THE ARMED FORCES WALKING PILGRIMAGE TO ASSISI – 10 TO 17 OCT 26

2026 marks the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi. Pope Leo has proclaimed a Franciscan Jubilee Year for 2026. This holy year invites the faithful to pilgrimage, particularly to Franciscan sites, offering special grace on the pilgrim, and focusing on peace, the ecology, and Franciscan spirituality.

To mark this Franciscan Jubilee Year, and to respond to the call of Pope Leo for pilgrimage, the Bishopric of the Forces is organising a walking pilgrimage along the Via di Francesco or Way of St Francis. We will start in the Umbrian town of Terni and walk 105km over 8 days through beautiful Umbrian Countryside finishing at the shrine of St Francis in Assisi. The paths we walk, and the villages we walk through, will have been familiar to St Francis. Daily walking distance will range from 8.2 to 24km. Our final day will be at leisure in Assisi.

Accommodation will be provided on a shared room, bed and breakfast basis in the Casa Nazareno Religious House in Spoleto. A packed lunch will be provided on each walking day. Casa Nazareno is run by the nuns of the Holy Family of Nazareth. The accommodation is ~~no~~ suite but simple, fitting for a pilgrimage of this type. The website of Casa Nazareno is [www.casanazareno.it/en/welcome-cas-nazareno/](http://www.casanazareno.it/en/welcome-cas-nazareno/)

We will fly from London Stansted with Ryan Air to Perugia on Sat 10 Oct at 0600. We will return from Perugia to London Stansted on Sat 17 Oct at 0945. We will be transported to our accommodation and to the start of each day's walk by minivan, which will return us to our accommodation each evening. The evening meal on the first and last night will be taken as a group. On the other evenings, meals are on a self-help basis. We are limited to 16 pilgrims and we would like a mix of RN, Army, RAF and MOD civil servants.

Bishop Paul Mason, Bishop of the Armed Forces, will lead the pilgrimage as he did on our similar successful pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in 2022, to Lisbon in 2023, and to Walsingham in 2024. There will be the opportunity for daily Mass and other devotions offered for peace in the world.

It is envisaged that you will need to take annual leave to take part in the pilgrimage, that you will need to arrange your own transport to and from the airhead, and arrange your own travel insurance. It is not envisaged that you will be able to make a claim against the public purse for T&S. That said, an Admin Order and JIs will be produced. Individuals are at liberty to approach their own chain of command and budget holder to discuss leave and funding options.

The overall cost of the pilgrimage per person is in the region of £800 to include flights, daily transfers, bed and breakfast accommodation on a shared basis, daily packed lunch on the walking days, Pilgrim Credential, and pilgrim T-shirt. The Service Roman Catholic Trusts have agreed to generously subsidise Whole Force personnel such that a personal contribution of £300 per pilgrim to take part is being sought.

For further information, or to register your interest to take part, please contact [Jeremy.wynne109@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Jeremy.wynne109@mod.gov.uk). Deadline for expressions of interest is cop 19 Apr.

Yours sincerely

*Reverend Dave Skillen*





VATICAN  
NEWS

*Vatican News is the portal for Vatican information where you can find the latest news on Pope Leo, the Holy See, the Church in the world, and international news.*

*Please follow the link to access the site: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en.html>*



# Online with Saints App



Online with Saints offers a virtual encounter with 100+ saints from all around the world. Women and Men, carpenters and scholars, mothers and popes, princes and paupers: their inspiring life stories are linked to real life modern questions. Be sure to check the social media profiles of the saints in the app.

Anyone can become a saint. Each saint is different, with their own unique personality and destiny. Each of them found their vocation in a different way - demonstrating that God has a special plan and vocation for everyone.

**# Download the FREE online with saints app on either [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)**

Discover much more information about the saints:

- Social media profiles of the saints.
- Animated videos about their lives.
- Information on their history.
- Pray with the saints and find patron saints.

**# Access videos**

Turn on the subtitles in YouTube

- Via the app: scan a saint in the book.
- Via the app: click on a saint's profile, play the video.
- Via the website [onlinewithsaints.com](#)
- Via the YouTube channel of *Online with Saints*

## *Catholic Military App is Live!*



The [Apostolat Militaire International](#) and [Tweeting with GOD](#) have launched the FREE Catholic Military Connect App. See the launch video [here!](#) It's designed explicitly for military Catholics.

- ❖ It offers:
- ❖ Strong Catholic prayers, all downloaded so they can be accessed easily whilst on ship/ops/ex etc.
- ❖ Answers to 200+ questions about faith and the military.
- ❖ Prayers specifically for the military.
- ❖ Testimonies from serving Catholics.
- ❖ Inspiring military Saints and quotes.
- ❖ Guidance for preparing for Mass and Confession.
- ❖ Spiritual first aid.
- ❖ Contact details for the Military Chaplain and Association of whichever country the user is in.
- ❖ The facility to upload spiritual reading.

The CMC app is currently available in both the [Google Play](#) and [App stores](#), for smartphones and tablets, in 8 languages (English, Italian, French, Spanish, Croatian, German, Portuguese and Dutch). This is an excellent resource for your spiritual armoury.

### **The Holy See endorses CMC App**



The Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Parolin, sent a message for the launch of the CMC App to the International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes. In his words: "I believe that the app will be immensely helpful to all military personnel, and in a particular way to young men and women who, in this important sector of civil service, seek to grow in personal friendship with Jesus Christ." See the video.



## Key Dates in May & June

The Ascension of the Lord – *14<sup>th</sup> May*  
(Solemnity)

Pentecost – *24<sup>th</sup> May*

Mary, Mother of the Church – *25<sup>th</sup> May*  
(Memorial)

The Most Holy Trinity – *31<sup>st</sup> May* (Solemnity)

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ –  
*7<sup>th</sup> June* (Solemnity)

The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus –  
*12<sup>th</sup> June* (Solemnity)

Immaculate Heart of Mary –  
*13<sup>th</sup> June* (Memorial)

The Nativity of St John the Baptist –  
*24<sup>th</sup> June* (Solemnity)

Ss. Peter and Paul, Apostles – *28<sup>th</sup> June*  
(Solemnity)

## Information.....

If you wish to know more about Roman Catholic matters within the Army Faith Community, please contact: **Mrs Karen Horn MBE** Pastoral Assistant (PA) to PRCC(A) at: [ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com](mailto:ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com)