



RAF ROMAN CATHOLIC

AUTUMN 2020 UPDATE



"Happiness can't be bought. And when you buy happiness, you realise that the happiness that is bought does not last. Only the happiness of love lasts." Pope Francis

Welcome to the Autumn 2020 update for the RAF Roman Catholic community. Regrettably, because of the worldwide pandemic, many of the events and initiatives planned this year have been postponed or cancelled. At the time of writing much uncertainty exists as to what guidelines and restrictions will be in place in the future. As such, future events may be subject to short notice change or cancellation. Please refer to the [website of the RC Bishopric of the Forces](#) for updates and information. The [website of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales](#) has more general information on COVID 19.

The New RAF Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain – One Year in Post

Following the retirement of Fr James Caulfield in July 2019, Rev Deacon (Sqn Ldr) Dave Skillen was appointed by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Forces, Bishop Paul Mason, as the Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain for the RAF. Padre Skillen was ordained Deacon in July 2010 and joined the RAF Chaplains' Branch in April 2014. Currently stationed at RAF Odiham, Padre Skillen and his fellow RC Chaplains ensure that the Church is alive within the RAF community and that the message of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. Please contact Padre Skillen (David.skillen100@mod.gov.uk) to simply say hello, request prayers to be said, or to get involved with the Catholic mission in the RAF.



...Events...Events...Events...Events...



Retreats 2020-21

At the time of writing, the planned Retreat at Ampleforth Abbey (30 Nov – 3 Dec 20) will proceed but watch this space. In 2021, due to unprecedented demand, we hope to hold 4 Retreats at Douai Abbey during Lent, at Belmont Abbey in the Summer, at Worth Abbey in the Autumn, and at Ampleforth Abbey in Advent. Further details to be announced. These Retreats offer personnel from the Whole Force the opportunity to find space and time to reflect and pray.

The Annual Solemn Mass of Remembrance

This will take place at Westminster Cathedral at 1030 on Sunday 8 November. Although Military Chaplains will be in attendance, the Cathedral has requested that there be no uniformed gathering this year due to restrictions on the numbers who can attend Church services. The [website of Westminster Cathedral](#) has details of the live streaming of services.



Chrism Mass – Tue 23 March 2021 – RC Cathedral of St Michael & St George, Aldershot

The annual Chrism Mass brings together the Bishop, priests, deacons and lay people of the Armed Forces to celebrate the blessing of the oils of catechumens, chrism and the sick. Time of Mass still TBC. To register your interest contact the Bishop's Secretary at Diane.restall654@mod.gov.uk



HCPT Pilgrimage

[HCPT](#) will not be proceeding with the 2021 Easter children's pilgrimage. However, it is hoped, if conditions allow, to conduct 2 children's pilgrimages to Lourdes in 2021 over 25 – 31 Jul and 24 – 30 Oct. Details of how to get involved with the RAF Group 187 can be found on the [website of the RC Bishopric of the Forces](#).

International Military Pilgrimage

The 62nd International Military Pilgrimage (IMP) to Lourdes is scheduled to take place between 20 – 24 May 2021. The theme for the pilgrimage is *Pacem Meam do Vobis* – My Peace I give unto you. More details covering the RAF involvement in the IMP will be issued once known.



RAF Annual Masses

It is hoped to be able to hold 2 annual RAF Masses starting in 2021. These Masses will be for the RAF RC community to join together for the celebration of the Eucharist. We hope to hold the first Mass at the Cathedral Church of the Bishop of the Forces, Aldershot in March with the second taking place at the RAF Church, St Clement Danes, in October. More details to follow.

Signposts to Mass, Prayer and Other Resources

- During the current restrictions, daily live streaming of Masses and other services can be found at [Church Services TV](#).
- Liturgical and devotional resources of the Catholic Church are available at [Universalis.com](#) which can also be downloaded as an app.
- The Catholic Military Association of Our Lady of Victories are a lay association of the faithful whose members cooperate to support Catholicism in the UK Armed Forces. Their [website](#) includes information on membership and on how to obtain free Miraculous Medals.
- The RAF RC Community has a private Facebook Group. Search for RAF RC Community.
- The [Defence Christian Network](#) (DCN) is a unified, multi-denominational Christian Network for both military personnel and MOD Civil Servants.

Pope Francis Prayer for Protection from Coronavirus

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will

and to do what Jesus tells us: He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

And Finally

Thank you for reading this edition of the RAF RC Newsletter. If you would like to know more about Catholic life in the RAF get in touch with the RAF PRCC directly or via his Pastoral Administrative Assistant, Jem Wynne at RAFPRCCPastoralAssistant457@outlook.com. If you would like to be added to our database and receive updates about RAF Roman Catholic life, IMP, HCPT etc, please let Jem know.