

Issue 48

"Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" – Psalm 34:14

Army Roman Catholic Newsletter

ARMY

Welcome

From

The Revd. Fr. Stephen Sharkey CF

Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (Army)



Welcome to Issue 48 of the Army Roman Catholic Newsletter

As we come together in this latest remembrance edition of our Army Roman Catholic newsletter, we pause to remember with thankfulness and prayer all those who have served in the Armed Forces and made the ultimate sacrifice. From the trenches of the First and Second World Wars, through Korea, the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan, and in conflicts and operations since, we remember the courage, service and sacrifice of those who did not return home. May we honour their memory not only through remembrance, but by continuing to uphold the values of faith, duty, comradeship and service for which they gave so much.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13

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REMEMBRANCE FOR THE CATHOLIC MILITARY COMMUNITY



Remembrance and the Month of the Holy Souls

As November approaches, our nation prepares to pause in solemn silence to mark Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. For those of us within the British Armed Forces community, this season is more than a civic tradition or a date in the calendar. It is a profound duty that touches the very heart of both our faith and our military vocation.

In the Catholic Church, November is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Souls. This provides a unique and natural bridge between remembrance and prayer. While the nation gathers around war memorials to honour a legacy of service and sacrifice, we are called to look with the eyes of faith, transforming memory into prayer. We remember not only names etched in stone, but the souls of men and women who have passed into eternal life.

Our Bishop of the Forces, Rt. Rev. Paul Mason, beautifully captured this responsibility when he wrote: "Not to remember our war dead would be to break trust with those who died for us, while not to pray for them would betray the solidarity and communion we share with them in Christ."

This solidarity is what the Church calls the Communion of Saints. It reminds us that the bonds of comradeship forged through service and sacrifice are not broken by death. Through Christ, they endure.

Whether we stand at the Cenotaph, gather at a local memorial, or worship in a deployment chapel, we do so in the presence of the Risen Lord who has conquered death. Military sacrifice finds its highest expression in His supreme act of love, for as the Gospel reminds us: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Reflecting on the significance of remembrance for today's Service personnel, Fr Paul McCourt recently observed: "Our remembrance observance is an annual salute to that innate human instinct to protect peace and all who live by it."

The military vocation is fundamentally one of service: standing between danger and the vulnerable, promoting security, and creating the conditions in which peace can flourish. Remembrance gives us the opportunity to honour those who paid the ultimate price while renewing our own commitment to serve with courage, integrity, and selflessness.

Whether you are deployed on operations overseas, training at home, serving as a reservist, veteran, or family member, I encourage you to make this season of remembrance deeply personal. Visit a local memorial, read the names of the fallen from your regiment or unit, and bring them before the altar in prayer.

Let us pray for all who have died in the service of the Crown. Let us pray also for those who continue to serve in harm's way today, and for the families who support them. May Mary, Queen of Peace, watch over and protect you, and may the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. **Amen**.

Faith in Training: Something is Stirring at Pirbright

Written by Fr. Pip Smith



On a recent Sunday morning, more than sixty people gathered for Mass at St. Edward the Confessor Roman Catholic Chapel at the Army Training Centre, Pirbright. In a training establishment populated overwhelmingly by young adults, and against a backdrop of perceived religious decline, something interesting appears to be happening.

More significant than attendance alone are the conversations taking place around it. Recruits are approaching Chaplains asking about the Catholic faith, with some seeking Baptism and Confirmation. What begins with curiosity, an invitation from a friend, or simply walking through the chapel door can develop into something much deeper.

It would be premature to describe this as a revival. Yet the experience at Pirbright raises an intriguing question: are we witnessing, in a small but tangible way, a renewed openness to faith among a younger generation?

Catholic Mass attendance in England and Wales increased from 503,308 in 2022 to 554,913 in 2023. Professor Stephen Bullivant of St. Mary's University has suggested this may represent a significant change after decades in which those dying or leaving the Church consistently outnumbered those joining it (*The Tablet*, 28th January 2025).

More interesting for those ministering within initial training is what appears to be happening among younger generations. Bullivant suggests that, having often grown up with little experience of organised religion, young adults can encounter faith as something "new and exciting".

There has been considerable discussion about a possible resurgence of Christian interest among young adults. Some of the most striking statistical evidence for that claim, including the Bible Society's *Quiet Revival* report has subsequently been withdrawn and should therefore be treated with caution. Yet at Pirbright we are encountering something tangible: young recruits are attending Mass in significant numbers and, more importantly, some are actively seeking Baptism and Confirmation.

A place to ask deeper questions:



Initial training is an extraordinary period in a young person's life. Recruits leave behind family, friends and familiar routines and enter an environment which demands much of them physically, mentally and emotionally. In a relatively short period of time, they are challenged to think differently about identity, belonging, discipline, service and sacrifice.

Perhaps it should not surprise us that such an experience can also prompt deeper questions.

Amid the noise and intensity of training, the chapel offers something different: silence, prayer, ritual, community and continuity. It provides a place in which questions about meaning, purpose, suffering, hope and God can be asked.

Not everyone who comes to St. Edward's arrives as a practicing Catholic. Some have grown up within the Church; others may be rediscovering a faith that has become distant. Some come with friends or simply out of curiosity. Increasingly, however, some are asking what it means to become Catholic or to complete their Christian Initiation through the Sacraments.

That distinction matters. Attendance is encouraging; a desire for Baptism or Confirmation tells us that something different may be taking place.

Again, there are parallels with the wider Church. Earlier this year, dioceses across England reported the highest numbers of adults preparing to enter the Catholic Church at Easter for at least fifteen years. Westminster Diocese expected almost 800 adults to receive the Sacraments of Initiation, while Southwark welcomed 590 converts, its highest number for 26 years.

Nor does this appear to be confined to Catholic life at Pirbright. Elsewhere across the Soldier Academy there are signs of a similar openness to faith. At the Army Foundation College, Harrogate, for example, 25 Junior Soldiers have recently been baptised into the Church of England. Different traditions and different contexts should not be too readily combined into a single narrative, but these experiences are nevertheless striking. Across initial training, chaplains are encountering young people who are not simply willing to engage with questions of faith, but who are taking positive steps to become part of the Christian Church.

Being authentically present:



There is, however, a danger in becoming preoccupied with numbers. Military chaplaincy is not ultimately about filling seats, nor should faith become another output to be measured.

There has been no elaborate strategy behind what we are seeing, either at Pirbright or more widely. Catholic Chaplaincy seeks simply to be faithfully and authentically present: accompanying recruits through training, being available when things are difficult, sharing ordinary life of the training establishment and providing the sacramental life of the Church.
Reflecting on the wider increase in those seeking to enter the Church, Bishop Mark Davies, suggested that this generation has been drawn not by some special initiative but by "the constancy of faith, the reverence of worship and the authentic witness they have found" (*The Tablet*, 23rd February 2026).

There may be an important lesson here for military chaplaincy. Young people may not need us to make faith fashionable or disguise it as something else. They may simply need the opportunity to encounter it authentically. This is one of the distinctive strengths of military chaplaincy. The chaplain at the altar on Sunday is also present throughout the training week: listening when things are difficult, accompanying recruits through setbacks and celebrating their successes.

A Church ready to receive them:



We should be cautious about drawing sweeping conclusions from the experience of one chapel. Sixty people at Mass at Pirbright does not demonstrate a general religious revival. Yet neither should we ignore what is happening before our eyes.

A generation frequently characterised as having little interest in institutional religion appears, at least in some places, to be asking religious questions again. Across initial training, there are signs of young men and women engaging seriously with questions of faith. At Pirbright, recruits are voluntarily coming to Mass and in some cases, asking for Baptism and Confirmation; elsewhere, others are taking similarly significant steps within their own Christian traditions.

Perhaps the question for Chaplaincy, therefore, is no longer how we persuade young soldiers to enter our churches and chapels. It may increasingly be whether we are prepared for them when they do.

More than sixty people gathering for Mass at St. Edward's is certainly something to celebrate. But perhaps the most encouraging thing happening at Pirbright is not simply the number coming through the chapel door. It is that some of those who enter are beginning to ask what comes next.

100 km, 10 Checkpoints, Zero Regrets: My Trailwalker Adventure

Written by Fr. Terkura Igbe



Before joining this "madness," I had never even heard of Trailwalker, let alone dreamed of tackling it across the rolling hills of the South Downs. It all started innocently enough at The English College in Valladolid where the Bishopric had organised a CPD. I thought it was a healthy practice to go out on a routine daily run with Fr. PJ, a man who does not so much jog as fly. He calls it a shuffle, if it really is but please do not get me wrong, I totally enjoyed going out for a run with Fr. PJ. A few days into the CPD, and out of nowhere, Fr. PJ spoke to me about a 100 km shuffle. I told him I had previously completed a 150 km pilgrimage from Conakry to Boffa while on mission in the republic of Guinea. With this, he turned to me and casually announced, "Fr. T, you are on my team!" Just like that, my fate was sealed.

When you are a total novice, you have no idea what you are signing up for. You ask a dozen questions, get twelve vague answers, and end up more confused than when you started. But reality set in fast once Fr. PJ handled the registration and handed me a terrifyingly detailed packing list. Luckily, Scotty, a legend, one of the service personnel, stepped in to guide me through the admin maze, and advising me how to go about business with my Regiment's MT.



Launch day arrived with a brutal 4:00 AM pickup on Saturday 11th September. Scotty swept me up, and by 4:45 AM we were in Aldershot grabbing the rest of the crew: Dr. Carina, Andy, and Fr. PJ. We pulled into the South Downs just in time for our 6:30 AM start. The task ahead? A casual 100 km trek across some of England's most dramatic landscapes.

The South Downs Experience:

Don't let the word "downs" fool you into thinking it is a gentle stroll. The trail is a chaotic mix of loose, ankle-twisting stones, sharp rocky patches, lung-bursting steep climbs, and knee-shattering descents that make you question your life choices.

Thankfully, the breathtaking English countryside offers pure magic between the aches. Across the 100 km, 10 strategically placed checkpoints offered sweet relief, hot drinks, and snacks for some, and the morale boosts needed to keep placing one foot in front of the other. At one of the checkpoints, Andy softly told me, "Fr. T, you need to add some electrolytes in your water because you are sweating!" With much fatigue I thought I heard "you need to add some electricity…" Whaat?

Suffering is better together. Pushing through 100 km transforms teammates into lifelong friends. Between the shared blisters, delirious laughter on the climbs, and mutual encouragement, the bond forged on the trail is unforgettable.









Why It Matters:

Beyond the physical test, Trailwalker carries profound significance. The British Army shares a long, historic bond with the Gurkha soldiers of Nepal, who organise and support this incredible event. Raising funds through this trek felt especially urgent following the devastating flash floods and landslides that struck Nepal on 26th August, destroying homes and displacing families. Knowing that every agonising step contributed directly to disaster relief in Nepal gave every mile a purpose far greater than just reaching the finish line.

Crossing that final line in 21 hours with my team, battered, sore, and profoundly exhausted, I realised that taking on Trailwalker was not just about surviving 100 km of brutal terrain. It was a hilarious, humbling reminder of what we can achieve when we say "yes" to "crazy ideas," lean on good friends, and walk for a cause so much bigger than ourselves. As a team, we have leaned on the generous donations of friends and our congregation at the Garrison Church, (now at Saint George – Bulford). Thank you all for your prayers and support. My feet may never truly forgive South Downs, but my heart would not trade the experience for the world.



First Holy Communions at the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. George, Aldershot



On Sunday 7th June at the 1100 hrs Mass at the Cathedral of the Bishop of the Forces, 17 young people received the Sacrament of First Holy Communion from Fr. Nick Gosnell.

Freddie, Seanna, Ariennala, Eleanor, Evelyn, Oliver, Thea, Freya, Claudia, Lily, Hector, Evan, Liam, Alejandro, Adrian, Harley and Arthur.

Please keep these young people and their families in your prayers as they move forward on their journey of faith.



Bringing History to Light: The Discovery and Significance of a Rare Chaplain's Portrait



Fr. Edmund Joseph Von Würtzburg
27th December 1840 – 11th October 1906 (aged 65)

The Acquisition

In January 2026, word reached the Army Roman Catholic Trust that a rare portrait of historical and ecclesiastical significance was coming to auction in Leyburn, North Yorkshire. The painting depicted a Roman Catholic Army Chaplain who had served on the front lines of the Second Anglo-Boer War. Following a tense exchange against competitive room bidding the Trust secured the artwork, rescuing a tangible piece of British military chaplaincy heritage.

The Man Behind the Portrait

From German Scholar to Battlefield Chaplain

The subject of the portrait is Fr. Edmund Joseph Von Würtzburg. Born in Bavaria, Germany on 27th December 1840, this remarkable Jesuit priest lived a life shaped by study, service, and quiet courage. His journey began in Germany at the University of Bonn, before he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in 1866 at Gorheim, Sigmaringen. Not long after, his path led him across borders and cultures when he transferred to the English Province of the Jesuits, completing his formation at St. Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst.

Stonyhurst would become a formative home. For six years he served the community as Assistant Prefect of Philosophers and Guest Master; roles that placed him at the heart of Jesuit intellectual life and hospitality. In 1877, he was ordained a priest at St. Beuno's College in North Wales, marking the beginning of a ministry that would take him far beyond the classroom.

After a year as Minister at the Jesuit novitiate in Roehampton, he was sent north to the Yorkshire mission, serving for a time in Pontefract before moving to St. Mary's, Chesterfield, as assistant priest in 1879.

His vocation would eventually take him even farther afield. Between 1901 and 1903, he served as a military chaplain during the Boer War in South Africa, bringing spiritual support to soldiers in the midst of conflict. For this service, he was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal. When the war ended, he returned once more to Chesterfield, continuing his ministry among the people he served so faithfully at the Catholic Church of Annunciation.

Fr. Edmund died in Sheffield on 11th October 1906, aged 65, and he is buried in the churchyard of the Immaculate Conception, Spinkhill, Northeast Derbyshire, a place still connected to his life and legacy. A life spanning universities, missions, and war zones, his story is a powerful reminder of the global reach and enduring commitment of the Jesuit calling.

The Conservation Journey



Before taking its place in its intended permanent home, the canvas required urgent conservation. The Trust was particularly fortunate to be able to entrust the work to a specialist restorer in Dorset, Lady Roberts, who was keen to lend her expertise to the project. Her skill in the conservation and restoration of antique frames and oil paintings was matched by a personal understanding of both the Catholic and military worlds.

Lady Roberts is the widow of the late Major General Sir Sebastian Roberts KCVO OBE of the Irish Guards. The eldest of ten children in a large Catholic family, Sir Sebastian was educated at Ampleforth and Balliol College, Oxford, before embarking upon a distinguished 33-year military career. His connection with the Irish Guards was a strong family tradition: two of his six brothers also served in the Regiment, as did two of his four children.



Elizabeth and Sebastian raised four children, and their family remained intricately connected to both the Catholic Church and the military. Although Elizabeth was a High Anglican rather than a Catholic herself, she married into a Catholic family and raised the children in the Catholic faith. This combination of Elizabeth's specialist knowledge, her deep understanding of the Catholic background, her family's long association with the British Army and her personal friendship with our community made her uniquely suited to undertaking the restoration of this important portrait.

Under Elizabeth's care, the painting underwent a meticulous and sympathetic restoration process, preserving as much of the original work as possible while addressing the damage and deterioration accumulated over the years. The restoration and conservation has allowed the portrait to be presented once again with a clarity and dignity appropriate to both its subject and its history.

For the Trust, this has been an important part of the painting's journey: from a North Yorkshire auction room, through careful conservation in Dorset, and ultimately towards its new and permanent home, where it can once again be seen and appreciated in the context of the Catholic chaplains who have served the British Army.

The Detail of the Conservation and Restoration

The painting underwent a programme of conservation to address accumulated surface dirt, oxidised varnish, previous restoration work, and areas of physical damage. Considerable surface dirt and some of the discoloured, oxidised varnish were removed, along with areas of heavy previous retouching, allowing the original paint surface to be more clearly revealed.

The canvas had become slightly slack on its stretcher and was particularly sensitive to changes in humidity, which caused it to contract and expand. Localised flattening was therefore carried out to areas where the canvas had become dented, including the area surrounding a small tear. This tear was repaired, while four additional patches were applied to the reverse of the canvas where necessary. The existing scratches and abrasions were also carefully retouched.

Following these treatments, a protective varnish was applied to provide an even, stable surface and to protect the painting from further environmental and surface damage.

Here are some of the photographs taken prior and during restoration:









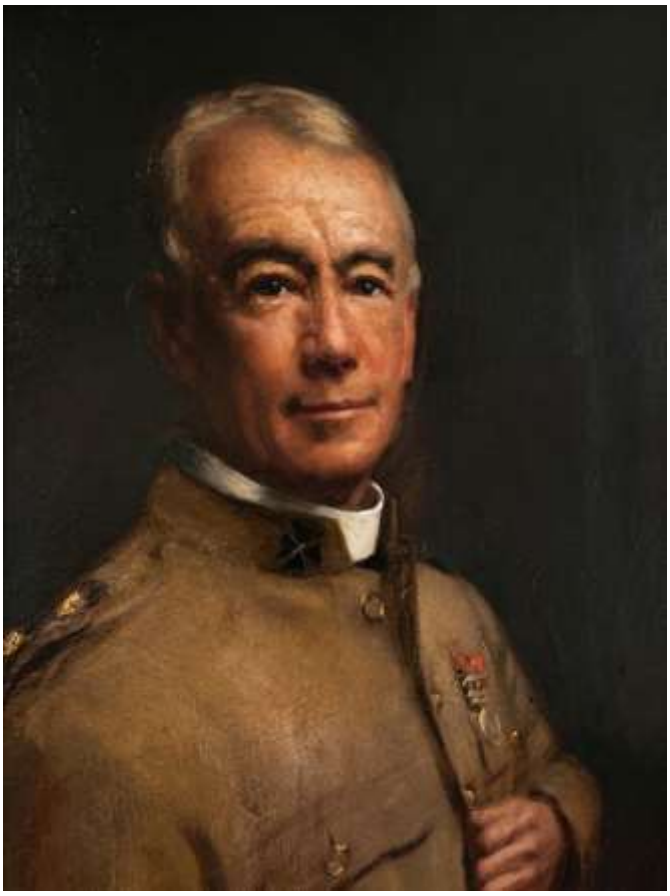




The striking post-restoration photographs bring the subject's gaze back to life, successfully erasing years of historic decay and revealing a masterpiece reborn:



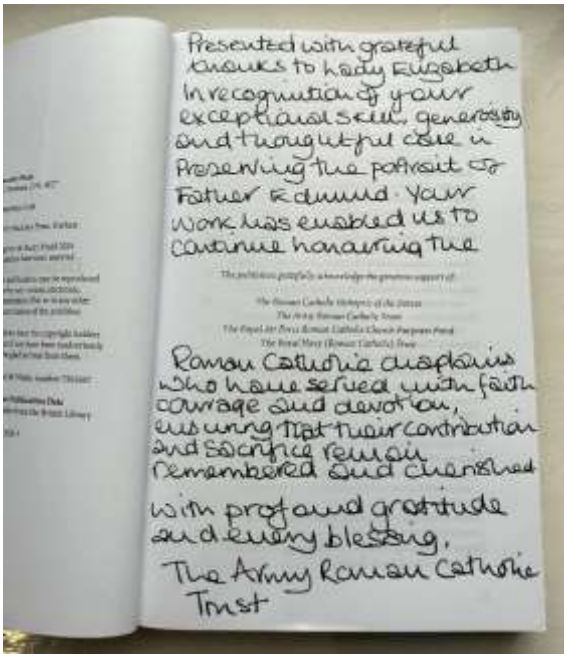






In recognition of her dedicated work, Elizabeth was presented with a hand-inscribed copy of *Defend Us in Battle* and a beautiful hand-tied bouquet of flowers alongside her professional fees. We owe a debt of gratitude to Elizabeth for beautifully restoring and bringing back to life this piece of Chaplaincy history.





Provenance and Technical Details



Rev. Fr. Edmund von Würtzburg SJ

British School (Early 20th Century)

Portrait of a Colonial Army Chaplain, three-quarter length, wearing a khaki uniform and holding a slouch hat.
Oil on canvas, with fragments of an indistinct original inscribed label verso, 125.5cm by 100cm.

Artist
J. H. Bentley, Sheffield

Provenance: Early Provenance unknown.

Formerly the property of Mount St. Mary's College and Barlborough Hall School, Derbyshire until 2026.

This work was sold in January 2026 on behalf of the Joint Administrators of Mount St. Mary's College and Barlborough Hall School, Derbyshire.



PRESERVING OUR SHARED HERITAGE

Help Offset Conservation Costs of a Rare Boer War Portrait

While Fr. Edmund's portrait has been saved and beautifully restored, the Army Roman Catholic Trust relies on voluntary contributions to acquire, conserve, and display artifacts that record the military chaplaincy's legacy.

Your support helps us preserve these vital testaments to faith, sacrifice, and duty.

How You Can Help

Every contribution, large or small, helps secure the preservation and display of this historic piece.

👉 **Donate via PayPal:**
https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=R3AGWCJ3B286J

📱 *Or scan the QR code to contribute instantly.*

A Legacy of Faith, Courage, and Community: Reflecting on the 230th RAChD Foundation Day at the National Memorial Arboretum

Written by Fr. Terkura Igbe



There is a profound, quiet joy in coming together to celebrate the Royal Army Chaplains' Department (RAChD) Foundation Day. In any structure, the strength of what stands above depends entirely on what lies beneath. The foundation is the anchor - the bed of rock upon which everything else is built and sustained.

On 23rd September, we gathered at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to mark a major milestone: 230 years since the establishment of the Chaplains' Department. More than just marking a date on the calendar, this day was a heartfelt tribute to the generations of chaplains, families, and supporters who have steadfastly preserved the Department's core ethos across centuries of service.





Lessons from the past: Honouring the Foundation and the Fallen

Our celebration at the Arboretum began with the first main event, a meaningful service divided into two distinct parts, starting in the chapel with focused readings and prayers. The chapel saw a wonderful turnout of chaplains past and present, alongside their families and friends. Standing side by side, one truth became abundantly clear: the bond of chaplaincy never truly ends when a period of service concludes. There exists an unwritten, enduring covenant among those who have worn the badge. It was a true privilege to interact with former chaplains and past leaders, listening to their rich tapestries of stories - reflections of deep challenge, quiet triumph, and unwavering grace.

After the chapel service, we moved out into the Arboretum grounds to the RAChD Memorial site for a solemn act of remembrance at the RAChD Memorial site, led by the Venerable Stephen Dunwoody KHC CF. A profound stillness settled over all present as we honoured those who gave their lives for their country, those known personally to us whose memories we hold dear, and those who lived and died in the service of humanity.



Every element of the ceremony carried weight and reverence:

- **The Exhortation**, delivered with deep serenity and respect.
- **The Last Post**, drawing us into a quiet, sacred period of silence.
- **The Reveille** and the laying of wreaths, symbolising light, hope, and enduring memory.
- **The Kohima Epitaph**, whose hauntingly timeless words resonated through every heart:

"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."
With the closing prayer, we joined our voices in the National Anthem - a poignant moment of national unity, expressing our shared pride, love of country, and allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III.

Present insights: unity, witness, and shared fellowship

The present reality of the Department is built upon the dedication of those who walked before us. During the chapel service, the Chaplain General, the Reverend Canon Michael D. Parker KHC CF, shared an encouraging reflection rooted in Hebrews 12:1–3, 14–15. Beginning with the call to be surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses," he emphasised three vital pillars for our work today: witnessing, unity, and love.



The Department has travelled a long journey to reach this moment, held together by the hard work, sacrifice, and faithful examples of our predecessors. Following the formal services, that spirit of unity carried over to a celebratory lunch at Aspects, one of the facilities at the National Memorial Arboretum. Gathering around the table as brothers and sisters in service brought immense warmth and joy. Laughter and stories filled the room as memories of past adventures were shared, old friendships were renewed, and new connections were forged.

Looking to the future: passing the torch to a new generation

As the formal event drew to a close, the Chaplain General expressed sincere gratitude to everyone who worked behind the scenes to make the Foundation Day so memorable.
Importantly, the day also bridged our proud history with our bright future. The CG extended a warm, enthusiastic welcome to the newly commissioned chaplains currently undergoing their post-Sandhurst chaplaincy training at Beckett House. Seeing this new generation step forward was a powerful reminder that while our traditions are centuries old, our mission remains fresh, vibrant, and forward-looking.

Conclusion: a living legacy
As we dispersed, we carried with us far more than just memories of a successful 230th anniversary. We carried a renewed sense of purpose and gratitude. The history of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department is not a static book kept on a shelf, it is a living, breathing story carried in the hearts of those who serve. Grounded in the courage of the past, strengthened by the fellowship and faith of the present, we look to the future with confidence, knowing that the foundation laid 230 years ago remains as unshakable as ever.



Written by Lt. Col. Bruce Ekman RLC

Walking, Talking and Reflecting: A Pilgrimage to Assisi

A pilgrimage is more than a long walk to a sacred place. It is a deliberate journey, undertaken with purpose. The physical movement matters, but so too does the inner journey: stepping away from normal routines, creating space for reflection, and becoming more attentive to faith, to other people and to the questions we often crowd out of everyday life.

From 10th – 17th October, I had the privilege of joining 15 colleagues from across the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Civil Service on a walking pilgrimage organised by the Roman Catholic Bishopric of the Forces. Over the seven days, we hiked approximately 100 km of the Way of St. Francis through the hills and valleys of Italy, finishing in Assisi. It was one of the most moving, uplifting and deeply spiritual experiences of my life.

Each day of the pilgrimage had a simple rhythm. We began and ended with prayer, celebrated Mass, and walked between 15-20km through the beautiful Italian countryside, through historic towns and up some demanding hills. There was plenty of time for silence, but just as importantly, there was time to talk and time to reflect. Rank, Service and profession quickly became less important. We walked as one group, sharing stories, discussing faith and belief, helping one another through tired legs and sore feet, and learning from perspectives different from our own.

That combination of physical effort, companionship and reflection was extraordinarily powerful. Walking for hours on end strips life back to essentials. The next path marker, the person beside you, the landscape and the thoughts you carry become the focus. Conversations developed naturally and often went far deeper than they might in an office or formal setting. There was laughter and friendship, but also honesty, vulnerability and a real sense of shared purpose.

The final approach to Assisi was unforgettable. After a week on the trail, arriving at the home of St. Francis gave the journey a meaning that is difficult to capture in words. We attended Mass in the Basilica of St. Francis, led by the Bishop of the Armed Forces. It was a profound conclusion to the pilgrimage and a moment to reflect on the distance travelled, physically, personally and spiritually.

Although Roman Catholic in character, the pilgrimage was open to people of all faiths and none. That openness mattered. Pilgrimage does not require everyone to begin with the same beliefs or reach the same conclusions. Its value lies partly in travelling together with curiosity, respect and a willingness to listen. In that sense, it offers a powerful model for interfaith understanding across Defence: shared endeavour can create trust, deepen compassion, and reveal how much we have in common.

I would wholeheartedly encourage anyone who sees a future Assisi pilgrimage, Camino de Santiago journey or any similar opportunity advertised to consider taking part. You do not need to be an expert in faith, or even certain what you are seeking. Bring good boots, an open mind and a willingness to walk. You may return tired, but also renewed, clearer in thought, strengthened by faith and companionship and grateful for the space to reflect on what truly matters.

Written by Sgt. Chris Kamwenje

"The pilgrimage to Assisi was a deeply meaningful experience that gave me time to reflect on my own journey of faith. Walking in the footsteps of the saints strengthened my faith and provided an opportunity to share the journey with people I had never met before. As the days passed, we became far more than fellow pilgrims. Through prayer, conversation, and walking together, we formed genuine bonds and became brothers and sisters in Christ.

One of the most poignant moments of the pilgrimage was the celebration of Mass among the olive terraces. Surrounded by the beauty and peace of creation, I was reminded of Jesus and His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. At the end of Mass, Bishop Paul invited us to remain silent and simply connect with nature. That period of stillness was particularly powerful. In the quiet, there was a profound sense of God's presence and the beauty of His creation.

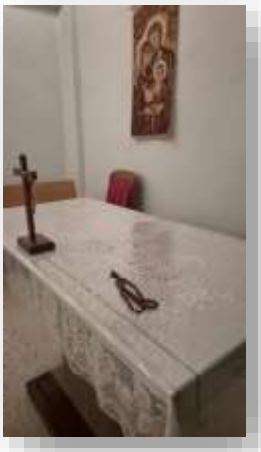
It is easy to understand why St. Francis was so captivated by the beauty of the Spoleto Valley. Standing there in prayer and silence, I found myself sharing in his appreciation for the splendour of God's creation. The pilgrimage was not only a journey through places associated with the saints, but also a journey of faith, fellowship, and spiritual renewal that I will carry with me for years to come."

Written by Musn. Dean Welsh
The Band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland

"The opportunity to travel to Assisi in the 800th year after St. Francis' death was very unique and one which I was keen to be part of when I saw it advertised.

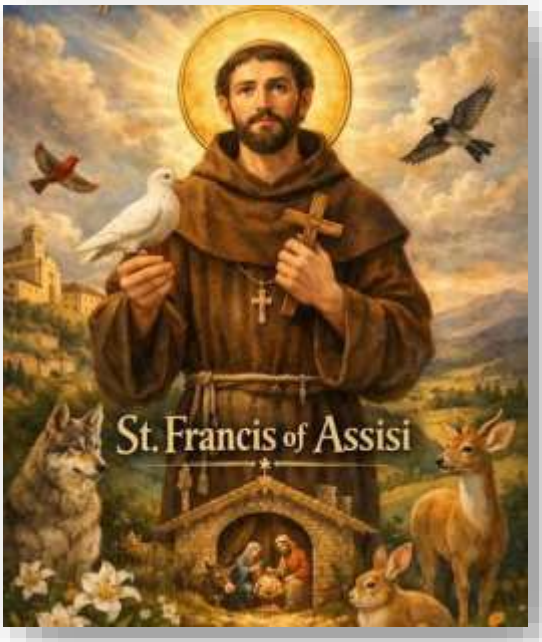
I wasn't 100% sure what to expect from the walking route itself and what I will remember is the beauty of the landscape and the hills but also the feeling of being accompanied by nature. There wasn't a day on the route where at some point we were almost followed by butterflies, spotted small birds in the trees or skies, witnessed lizards scurrying away or even saw a snake in the bushes by the river. It wasn't a feeling of being surrounded by the wildlife of Umbria but accompanied by it as we journey to Assisi. Our outdoor Mass on the hillside was a great tribute to this and a unique moment of stillness and reflection of the week.

The opportunity to serve at Mass and contribute to the accompanying music was also something I appreciated and volunteered to do. What was interesting was the conversations that followed with others about these lay opportunities/ ministries that we can be involved with to contribute to our own Parishes.



Perhaps the most personal moment of the week for me was having a set of Rosary Beads blessed during Mass on the Wednesday Morning. It was unique to have them on the Altar during the Mass and then blessed by the Bishop of the Armed Forces. It was then really nice to use them on the walk that day to pray the Rosary with the group and the Bishop who had blessed them, something very few people would have the opportunity to do.

It was a great week and something I would encourage anyone who is considering undertaking a similar Pilgrimage to undertake."





Remembering the Fallen, Honouring the Legacy. Memorial Service for 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland. (1 SCOTS).

Written by Fr. Stephen Sharkey PRCC(A)
Senior Chaplain 51 Infantry Brigade and HQ Army in Scotland.

My first official engagement as Senior Chaplain 51 Infantry Brigade and HQ Army in Scotland was both a privilege and an honour. On Sunday 11th October, former members of 1 SCOTS, serving personnel, veterans, families and invited guests gathered at the 1 SCOTS Memorial at Dreghorn Barracks, Edinburgh, for a service of remembrance. The service preceded a parade from Edinburgh Castle to Canongate Kirk for the historic Laying Up of the Colours of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.



The occasion brought together past and present in a powerful act of remembrance. It provided an opportunity to give thanks for the service of generations of soldiers, to honour those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, and to reflect upon the enduring values that continue to define The Royal Regiment of Scotland.



The memorial cross at Dreghorn, unveiled by HRH The Princess Royal in 2011, stands as a lasting tribute to the Battalion's fallen. During the service, particular remembrance was given to Captain Walter Barrie, Corporal Johnathan Moore, Lance Corporal Joseph Pool, Private Sean McDonald and Private Stuart Collins, whose names are inscribed upon the memorial. Their sacrifice represents not only the loss borne by families, friends and comrades, but also the cost of the freedom and security that we so often take for granted.

The Act of Remembrance was especially moving. Binyon's timeless words, *"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,"* echoed across the memorial as veterans and serving soldiers stood together in reflection. The sounding of the Last Post, followed by a period of silence and Reveille, provided a solemn opportunity to remember all those who have died in service to their country.

The service also formed part of the historic Laying Up of the 1 SCOTS Colours. For soldiers, Colours are far more than ceremonial banners. Traditionally carried on the battlefield as a rallying point, they embody the spirit, achievements and history of a regiment. The King's Colour and Regimental Colour carried by 1 SCOTS were presented by Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in Holyrood Park, Edinburgh, in July 2011 and accompanied the Battalion throughout a remarkable period of operational service.



Formed in 2006 through the amalgamation of The Royal Scots and The King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1 SCOTS served with distinction on operations in Northern Ireland, Iraq, Afghanistan, Cyprus, Bosnia and Sierra Leone. The Battalion adapted to the evolving demands of modern military service before being redesignated in 2021 as the 1st Battalion, The Ranger Regiment.

Yet, as many reflected throughout the day, the laying up of the Colours does not mark the end of the Battalion's story. Rather, it symbolises the continuation of what was frequently described as the Regiment's "golden thread" - the heritage, values and spirit passed from one generation to the next. The legacy of 1 SCOTS endures through the Regular and Reserve battalions of The Royal Regiment of Scotland, as well as through those former members who continue to serve with The Ranger Regiment and within veterans' communities across the country.

In my reflection during the service, I noted that military history is not simply recorded in battle honours, campaigns or operational deployments. Rather, it is written in the lives of those who served, who stood together in adversity, and who demonstrated courage, loyalty, selfless commitment and comradeship. These qualities remain as relevant today as they were to those whose names are engraved on memorials throughout our nation.

As The Royal Regiment of Scotland approaches its twentieth anniversary, it does so with a proud record of operational achievement, public service and community engagement. Over two decades, the Regiment has deployed on combat operations, peacekeeping missions and national resilience tasks, while also maintaining a visible presence within communities across Scotland through ceremonial and civic duties. The service at Dreghorn was therefore about far more than remembering the past. It was a reaffirmation of the values that continue to inspire today's soldiers and chaplains alike. While Colours may eventually be laid to rest, the memories, sacrifices and example of those who served beneath them endure. The Regiment's history is carried forward not only in museums and memorials, but in the lives of those who continue to serve and in the communities that remember them.

As we departed the memorial, the words of St. John's Gospel remained with many of us:

***"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."* (John 15:13)**

May all who gave their lives in service of others rest in peace, and may their example continue to inspire future generations.

The Cathedral of St. Michael and St. George -Aldershot



A Fond Farewell to Tony Hyman After 16½ Years of Dedicated Service

On 30th September, the clergy and congregation of the Cathedral Church of St. Michael and St. George, Aldershot, gathered to bid a fond farewell to Tony Hyman, the Cathedral's long-serving Verger, as he retired from the Civil Service after 16½ years of loyal and devoted service.

Tony's final Mass was celebrated by the Right Reverend Paul Mason, Bishop of the Forces, alongside Fr. Nick Gosnell. It was a fitting occasion to give thanks for Tony's many years of service, both to the Cathedral and to the wider military community.

Tony's journey with St. Michael and St. George began in the early 2000s, when he first became part of the worshipping community. In 2004, he became a Eucharistic Minister and, around 2006–07, took on the role of altar server. In 2009, he was appointed Verger, a position in which he has served with dedication and commitment ever since. Before joining the Cathedral team, Tony had worked at Broadmoor Hospital in Berkshire.

Following the Mass, friends, members of the Cathedral's faith community and Tony's family gathered at St. Andrew's Church Hall to celebrate his retirement and reflect on his many years of service.

In recognition of the special place Tony holds within the Cathedral community, the congregation presented him with a beautiful miniature Verger's wand, lovingly crafted from wood taken from the Bishop's chair. This unique and thoughtful gift will serve as a lasting reminder of Tony's close association with the Cathedral and the affection in which he is held.





Tony's service was also formally recognised with the presentation of a Garrison Commander's Commendation, acknowledging his loyal and devoted contribution over the years.

Tony has been a valued member of the Cathedral team and the wider Aldershot Garrison community. His dedication, commitment and willingness to serve have made a lasting impression on all those who have had the pleasure of working alongside him and sharing in the life of the Cathedral.

As Tony begins this well-earned new chapter, the clergy, congregation and wider garrison community extend their heartfelt thanks and very best wishes to him.

Thank you, Tony, for 16½ years of outstanding service. You will be greatly missed, and we wish you a long, happy and fulfilling retirement.



Thank you to Aldershot Garrison for the photographs.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Written by Mr. Jason (Jay) Bridge



Picture taken 11th April 2009, Marjah, Afghanistan. Showing bullet wound to left arm.

Growing up I did not have any exposure to religion, my mother was Baptised Roman Catholic, but we never went to Church, she never talked about her faith, and she did not have me Baptised. I joined the Armed Forces at the age of 15 and 9 months as a junior leader in Shorncliffe, Kent. My only recollection of faith at that time was being forced by the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) to attend the Church service on Remembrance Day. I remember him personally checking that we each had a pound for the collection.

I joined the Royal Hampshire Regiment, and in September 1992 we were amalgamated with the Queens Regiment, forming the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. I served a number of operational tours including Northern Ireland (Six Times) and Bosnia and Afghanistan (twice).

As time progressed, I became more interested in faith, even to the point that I attended a Mass in a Church in Northern Ireland whilst I was posted there. I sat at the back, the last one in and the first one out. I had no idea what was going on or why; I just knew that I should not talk at all, because I thought that the presence of a British Soldier would not have been well received. It was not a peaceful experience as I was terrified that I would be discovered.

I met my (now) wife at that time, she lived in Milton Keynes, she is a Catholic but was no longer practicing her faith and did not attend Church. Fast forward to April 2009, when I was posted to Afghanistan, there was a planned operation that we were conducting. I was an infantry soldier (a Sergeant) and I volunteered to operate a General-Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) which would provide protection from on top of a container vehicle that carried stores for a new small base that we were going to build including wooden components for a new watch tower.

In the area that we formed up ready to move into the battle area, I was already having enemy fire hit the container I was on, and the rounds were penetrating the vehicle quite close to where I had positioned myself.

I assessed that it was highly likely that I would be shot once we moved forward, as I was quite exposed and I could be seen clearly by the enemy. However, I could not move because there was no other way to provide protection for the vehicle, the people within and its contents. At this time, I prayed. I knew I was going to be shot, but I asked if any wounds I received would not be dramatically life changing. I said in my prayer that, in exchange for my life and not being seriously injured, I would raise my family in the Church. At this time my then fiancée was pregnant with my unborn daughter.



I surrendered myself completely to God, I said that my life would be his if he could do this for me. A few minutes later we moved into the battle area, and sure enough I was indeed shot twice; once in the chest and once in my left arm. The first bullet which struck my chest was completely stopped by the body armour I was wearing. However, the bullet had penetrated a magazine that was attached to my chest rig. The armour piercing round travelled almost completely through the magazine but, in doing so, travelled through a number of rounds that should themselves have exploded on impact.
They did not!



The second round penetrated my left arm. When it did so, I did not feel any pain at all. It felt as if time had slowed, I experienced an overwhelming sense of peace and love. Accompanying this feeling was the smell of fragrant roses or something similar, a beautiful smell. This smell was certainly not present in the environment around me prior to the incident. It was at this point I knew that I had received the help that I had asked for. My prayer had been answered. The photograph was taken a few minutes later. At no point did I receive painkillers as I did not need them. I look very happy, and indeed I was, I knew that I had received the help I had asked for, it was life changing.

Upon returning from the tour, I sought out the Armed Forces RC chaplain in Cyprus, (Fr. Michael Fava) and began the process of being Baptised, in order to raise my child in the faith as I had promised. I served 32 years in the Army in total, 24 in the Regular Army and then a further 8 in the Reserves. I am now an MoD Civil servant.

I was finally baptised in 2010 and married in the Church and had a second child with my wife. We attended mass once a week and I thought that this was what I should do to keep the promise I had made on that day; to become a shepherd for my family within the Church.

That was until my parish priest asked me to consider the diaconate. From that moment I knew I was being called to be a shepherd not only for my family, but also for the parish and diocese. After almost 5 years of training, consisting of a preparatory year and a four-year diaconate program, I am due to be ordained as a Permanent Deacon in June 2027 by Archbishop Richard Moth, who was the Bishop of the Armed Forces during the encounter with faith that changed my life.

My Baptism in 2010





After being installed as an acolyte, which is one of the steps prior to ordination.

‘GREAT JOY’ AS CANONIZATION CAUSE OF IRISH MILITARY CHAPLAIN FATHER WILLIE DOYLE HEADS TO ROME

Written by Ruadhán Jones, OSV News, 16th October 2026



Servant of God Willie Doyle (1873-1917), an Irish Jesuit priest, is pictured in military uniform in this undated photo. (OSV News photo/courtesy Father Willie Doyle Association)

DUBLIN (OSV News) — The cause for the canonization of the World War I Jesuit Irish chaplain Father Willie Doyle, who was killed while ministering to injured soldiers, is set to head to Rome, with the diocesan phase formally concluding on 18th October.

Patrick Kenny, president of the Wille Doyle Association, told OSV News that it is a “great joy” for the organisation and devotees of the heroic Irishman across the world to see his cause move forward.

Father Doyle has a powerful message for our own era, serving as an "icon of peace and reconciliation" in a time marked increasingly by wars across the globe, Kenny continued.

He said the latest development is a sign of the "momentum" growing behind the servant of God's cause, with the lay association — founded in 2020 to promote Father Doyle's case for sainthood — receiving letters and emails from people all around the world who have been inspired by his holiness.

1st cause to formally close in Ireland in 40 years

His cause is the first to formally close in Ireland in more than 40 years, according to Father Doyle's postulator and historian of Irish saints, Father John Hogan. If Father Doyle were to be canonized, he would become the first Irish saint since the 16th-century martyr St. Oliver Plunkett, whose sanctity was recognized by the Church in 1975.

Father Doyle was born in Dublin in 1873 and joined the Jesuit order in County Meath at the age of 18. He desired to be a missionary to Africa but was not selected for the task.

However, after the outbreak of World War I, which lasted from 1914 to 1918, he volunteered for the Royal Army Chaplains' Department of the British army in 1915.

He was assigned to the Royal Irish Fusiliers, a part of the 16th (Irish) Division of the British Army.

Father Doyle joined the thousands of Irishmen who took part in some of the key battles of World War I in France, including the infamous Battle of the Somme, during which over 1 million men died between July and November 1916.

Lived and suffered alongside his men

Although a captain, he lived and suffered alongside his men, being awarded the Military Cross for his bravery at the Battle of the Somme. He was killed in 1917 while ministering to two soldiers under heavy fire.

Aside from his heroic life and death, Kenny told OSV News that people continue to be attracted by Father Doyle's sense of humour, "warmth" and commitment to small daily life sacrifices.

One famous devotee of Father Doyle's was St. Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei, who was enthralled by what he referred to as "the butter tragedy."

When reading Father Doyle's diaries, St. Josemaría noticed that the Irish priest undertook the small but psychologically significant mortification of giving up butter, a great love of his. Father Doyle wrote in his journal each day whether he had been successful in his battle, an example of ordinary heroism that impressed St. Josemaría.

Father John Hogan told OSV News that Father Doyle's struggles with his mental health — he experienced a nervous breakdown after a fire at his house of formation — have also "touched the hearts of many" who face similar difficulties today.

'A sign of hope for those who do struggle'

"He is a sign of hope for those who do struggle," said Father Hogan, adding that Father Doyle's experiences can "console" and "encourage" them to see beyond the "darkness," with the help of God's grace.

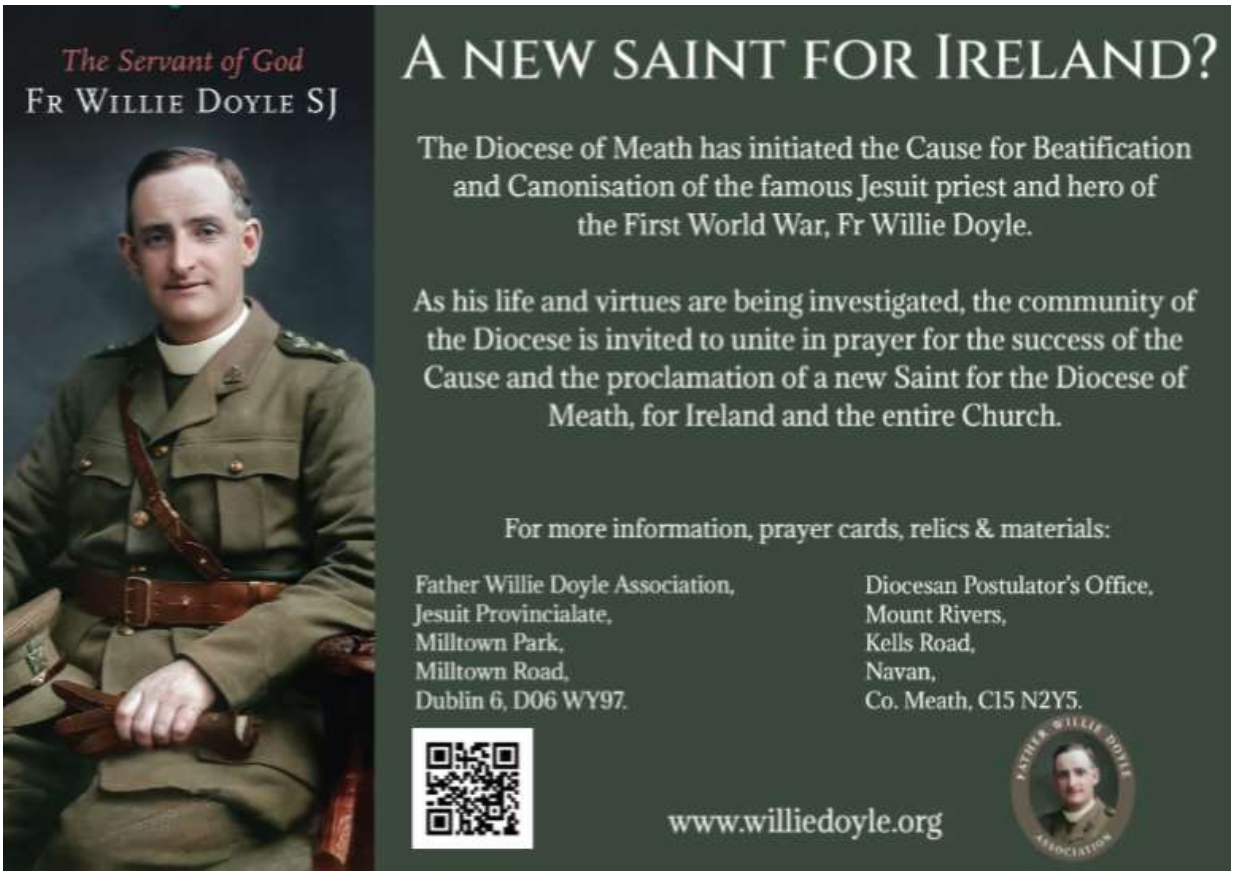
In a press release on 7th October, Father Hogan explained that the latest development marks "an important landmark for Father Willie's cause."

The "extensive material" gathered during the diocesan stage will be sent to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in Rome, he said.

The dicastery will consider if Father Doyle's life demonstrates Christian virtues to a heroic degree, which is required if any candidate is to be declared venerable.

After that, it is a case of waiting for a miracle, with Father Hogan encouraging people to pray through Father Doyle's intercession and, if they believe they have received a healing through his intercession, "to report it to us as soon as possible."

In the same statement, Kenny thanked Bishop Tom Deenihan of Meath for his personal commitment to the cause. Bishop Deenihan will lead solemn vespers in the Cathedral of Christ the King in the Diocese of Meath on 18th October to mark the completion of the local phase of the investigation.



What is the process for someone to become a saint?

The formal path to sainthood in the Catholic Church is called canonisation and involves four main stages.

1. **Servant of God**

- **Waiting period:** The process normally cannot begin until at least five years after the person's death (though the Pope can waive this rule).
- **Local investigation:** A local bishop investigates the candidate's life, writings, and reputation for holiness.
- **Submission:** If approved locally, the cause moves to the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and the person is named a Servant of God.

2. **Venerable**

- **Vatican review:** The Congregation thoroughly reviews the candidate's life and writings for proof of moral certainty and deep Christian virtue.
- **Heroic virtue:** If the Pope approves a decree stating the person lived a life of heroic virtue (or offered their life), they are officially titled Venerable.

3. **Blessed (Beatification)**

- **First miracle:** For non-martyrs, one verified miracle—usually an instantaneous, permanent, and scientifically unexplainable medical healing—must be attributed to the candidate's intercession. Martyrs do not require a miracle at this stage.
- **Beatification:** Once the miracle is verified by doctors, theologians, and the Pope, a beatification ceremony is held, and the person is given the title Blessed. Veneration is usually restricted to a specific region or group.

4. **Saint (Canonisation)**

- **Second miracle:** A second verified miracle occurring after the beatification is required (again, martyrs only require one overall miracle in the process).
- **Canonization:** After the second miracle undergoes the same strict medical and theological scrutiny, the Pope performs the canonization. This officially declares the person a Saint for universal veneration across the entire Church.

Pope Leo XIV



Prayer & Update: Pope Leo XIV Recovers Following Successful Surgery

The Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, recently underwent a period of unexpected health challenges. We share a summary of the events and medical updates to guide our prayers in the coming days.

The Diagnosis and Admission

During routine medical examinations, doctors discovered a small, well-localised nodule in the Pope's right lung. Acting on medical advice, Pope Leo XIV was admitted to Rome's Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic Hospital on Tuesday, 13th October, to undergo a scheduled surgical procedure.

The Procedure and Recovery

The three-hour operation (with the surgery itself lasting approximately 90 minutes) was successfully performed without complications. Surgeons removed the lower lobe of the right lung, and subsequent laboratory examination of the tissue confirmed a diagnosis of lung adenocarcinoma.

However, encouraging news followed: doctors confirmed that the procedure successfully removed all of the malignant tissue and that no further medical treatment is necessary.

Demonstrating his characteristic resilience, the Pope resumed light work just days after the operation, celebrated Mass for the hospital staff, and was discharged on Saturday, 17th October returning to the Vatican to continue his convalescence.

Current Medical Outlook

While his postoperative recovery is progressing exceptionally well, confirmed by positive follow-up chest X-rays and blood tests, his medical team, including Dr. Luigi Carbone and Professor Stefano Margaritora, have advised caution. As a precaution due to the relatively short time since surgery, upcoming travel plans have been postponed, and the Holy Father is expected to observe a further ten days of monitored recovery at the Vatican.

Let Us Pray

As members of the UK Armed Forces Catholic community, let us unite in prayer for the Holy Father's continued healing and strength.

Almighty and eternal God, the eternal health of those who believe, hear us on behalf of Your servant Pope Leo XIV, for whom we implore the aid of Your tender mercy, that, restored to health, he may render thanks to You in Your Church. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



St Patrick's Garrison Church, Tidworth, Refurbishment Project



Major refurbishment works commenced this month at St. Patrick's RC Garrison Church, Tidworth. The project is expected to take approximately twelve months to complete and will involve significant structural repairs, a complete roof replacement, and a range of other essential works requiring urgent attention. These improvements will help preserve the church building and ensure that it continues to serve the Catholic community on Salisbury Plain for many years to come.

St. Patrick's Presbytery

The house adjoining St. Patrick's Church, formerly the presbytery for the priest serving Salisbury Plain, has stood vacant for several years and is now undergoing a comprehensive refurbishment.

Following discussions with the Garrison Commander, it has been agreed that the building will be redeveloped as a valuable resource for the parish community. The refurbished property will provide much-needed facilities, including accessible toilets, a kitchen, meeting rooms and storage space. Once completed, it will serve as the new Parish Centre, supporting parish activities and wider community engagement.

The centre will be named in honour of Fr. Francis Gleeson, the renowned Irish Army chaplain of the Royal Munster Fusiliers during the First World War. While Fr. Gleeson did not join the regiment until 1914, he is closely associated with the soldiers whose faith, generosity and sacrifice helped establish St. Patrick's Church. Completed in 1912, the church was one of Britain's first purpose-built Roman Catholic garrison churches and was funded largely through contributions from soldiers stationed at Tidworth, including members of the Royal Munster Fusiliers.

The naming of the new Parish Centre provides a fitting tribute to Fr. Gleeson's enduring legacy and to the generations of Catholic servicemen and women who have worshipped at St. Patrick's over more than a century. It also reflects the church's rich military heritage and its continuing role at the heart of Catholic life within the garrison community.

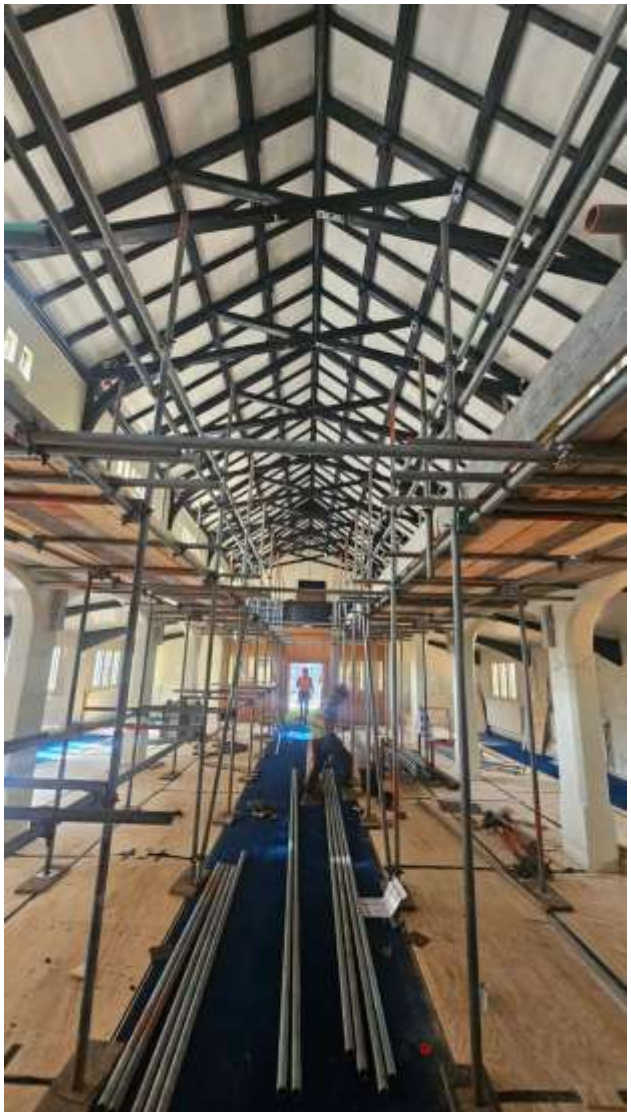
As refurbishment work gets underway at St. Patrick's RC Garrison Church, Tidworth, Fr. Stephen Sharkey, PRCC(A), joined Fr. Terkura for a tour of the site earlier this month. Their visit marked an important milestone in the redevelopment of both the church and the adjoining presbytery. The following photographs provide a glimpse of the work now in progress and the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the life of the parish.













Shepherds in Uniform

A Chaplain in Afghanistan
Fr. Thomas Jackson MHM

Written by Dr. James Hagerty

The recent campaign in Afghanistan is firmly rooted in the British consciousness. From 2001 to 2021, British and Allied armed forces were involved in a bitter struggle against a determined Taliban foe. 457 British service personnel were killed and 2,188 were wounded. Scenes from the conflict and repatriation were shown on television, articles were published in the press, and videos were shared on social media. In many homes in the United Kingdom, sad memories of the war prevail.



But this lengthy campaign was not the first time that British soldiers had fought in a region that used to be termed 'the North-West Frontier' of India. From 1839 to 1842 Britain was at war with Afghanistan in the First Afghan War; from 1878 to 1880 Britain was again at war with Afghanistan in the Second Afghan War; and in 1919 there was a Third Afghan War. In all cases the forces of Imperial Britain tried to exert influence over Afghanistan and protect the frontier of British India, but the outcomes were less than favourable for the British army.

After the East India Company ceased to exist in 1858, the British Indian Government assumed responsibility for the deployment and payment of regiments of the British army in India, for regiments of the Indian Presidencies and for army chaplains. When the Second Afghan War broke out the British government in India requested the Vatican to supply English-speaking chaplains for English and Irish troops and in return the Church was given the right to establish new missions in Afghanistan with British military protection. The Vatican chose the recently formed St. Joseph's Foreign Missionary Society based at Mill Hill, north London, for this assignment and, in return for providing chaplains, the Society was promised the new missionary territory in Afghanistan. Bishop Herbert Vaughan, founder of the Mill Hill Missionaries, saw the acceptance of army chaplaincy as a useful entry point for his wider schemes of missionary evangelization. The composition of the new Society was international, but all priests spoke excellent English.



Mill Hill Missionaries had been in India since 1875, but the clergy deployed to Afghanistan sailed out in two additional cohorts. In April 1879, four missionaries – Frs Aelen, Browne, Burke and Van Eyndthoven left England and on arrival in India journeyed north to the distant garrisons. The chaplains were assigned to English regiments and soon found the climatic conditions, the army milieu, local culture and insanitary conditions very difficult. In July Fr. Van Eyndthoven died of dysentery.

The second cohort – Frs Thomas Jackson, John Temme and Gerard Raatger left England on shortly after Fr. Jackson's ordination on 28th September 1879. Fr. Jackson recalled: 'When I had been a priest three days, I left Mill Hill with two companions to go to Afghanistan to serve as volunteer chaplains to the British soldiers in the Afghan War.' Contemporary public opinion was united in describing the mission in the most doleful terms.
Soon after arriving in Karachi Fr. Jackson set off for Quetta and the 66th Regiment (later Royal Berkshire Regiment) in General Burrow's Brigade. They then departed for Kandahar 200 miles away. No arrangements for the padre who had been given a baggage-cart for his equipment nor had he received priestly faculties.

For five days, in intense heat, wearing his cassock, the padre walked alongside the military column which was attacked frequently. Reverend Alfred Cane, an experienced Anglican chaplain with British and Indian regiments, wrote: 'We had Father Jackson, the R.C. padre, out with us. He went on foot and was carrying about a cannon ball which passed by him. He might have made a collection of them.' The column eventually faced and defeated a force of the Emir of Kandahar.



Fr. Jackson and Reverend Kane were then present at the Battle of Maiwand in Kandahar Province on 27th July 1880, regarded by Victorians as a military disaster. 2,500 Anglo-Indian troops fought off over 25.000 Afghans. Fr. Jackson described the battle: 'As soon as the armies came within gunshot of each other the battle began with dreadful fury…Cannon balls and bullets began to fall on every side of us and made dreadful havoc among our men. After an hour or two we were entirely surrounded… and it seemed all was lost, for I could not see how any of us could escape alive…' In the midst of fierce combat, death, bravery, noise and mayhem the padre tended the wounded offering spiritual and physical consolation. Fr. Jackson escaped but was exhausted and was carried in a bullock wagon away from the battlefield. 970 British and Indian troops were killed and 166 were wounded. A London newspaper stated: 'Rev. Thos. Jackson, a missionary priest from Mill Hill, appears to have behaved with great courage and fortitude. He accompanied the advance guard under fire at Maiwand, was present in the thick of the combat, and shared in the retreat through that terrible desert…' An officer recalled: 'I never saw a man more earnestly devoted to his work and duty. He is one of the best and bravest men I ever met…During the action…I saw him walking about in the thickest of the fire quite unconcernedly'. The defeated force raced 40 miles to Kandahar where they were besieged and where Fr. Jackson worked among the wounded troops. After the siege was lifted, Fr. Jackson returned to Maiwand where he said Mass on the battlefield and had the sombre duty of burying the many dead left where they fell. The Catholic weekly *The Tablet* wrote: 'In token of admiration, Fr. Jackson was allegedly given the flag which had floated over Kandahar. Officers said that the padre's heroism was such that he deserved the Victoria Cross.'
The other Mill Hill Missionaries were involved in engagements which demanded their priestly attention and Fr. Browne, the senior chaplain among them, was adamant that they all submitted requests for the campaign medals and clasps they were due. The medals were duly awarded.

The Vatican's promise of missionary territory, however, was not fulfilled and Bishop Vaughan's hope of missionary territory for his Society did not materialise. The British withdrew from Afghanistan and refused to protect any future missions. Fr. Jackson was assigned to Borneo whilst other Mill Hill Missionaries assumed missionary work in the Punjab.



Monsignor Thomas Jackson

Fr. Jackson died in Lancashire in 1916 aged 72 after a life of missionary endeavour and military heroism.



Afghanistan Padre – Fr. Thomas Jackson MHM

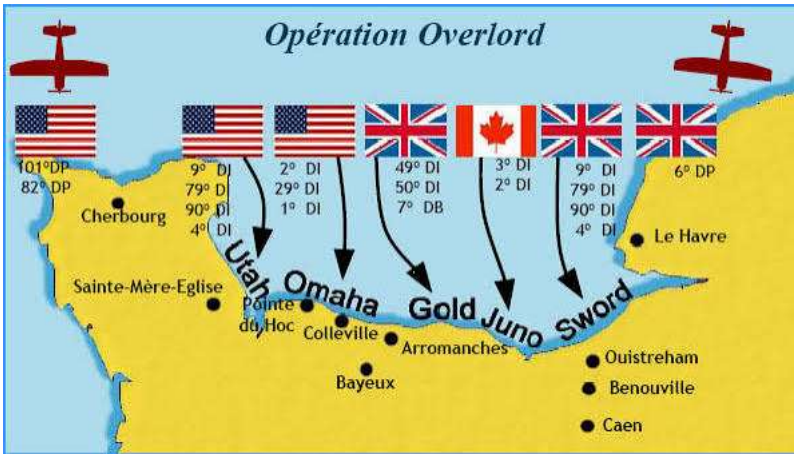
(seated to left of middle group wearing cassock)

Photo courtesy of Mill Hill Archives

D-Day Padres
Catholic military chaplains in *Operation Overlord*

Written by Dr. James Hagerty

On 6th June 1944 Allied troops landed in Normandy and began *Operation Overlord*, the campaign to liberate Nazi occupied Europe. As glider, parachute and amphibious landings took place, the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force bombarded German positions. By the end of June over 850,000 troops, 150,000 vehicles and 570,000 tons of supplies had been carried from southern England across the English Channel in a meticulously planned air and seaborne invasion. Accompanying the expeditionary force were Catholic military chaplains.



D-Day

In the early morning of 6th June 3rd Parachute Brigade landed in Normandy. Fr. Joseph McVeigh of Westminster Diocese, attached to 8th Parachute Battalion, was captured when his glider crashed near an enemy position. Fr. James Kenny of Lancaster Diocese, with 224th Parachute Field Ambulance, was immediately involved in caring for the wounded. At one point, with a wounded man on his back, he led paratroopers to safety after they had become isolated. Padres attached to field ambulances were Fr. Maurice McGowan of Westminster Diocese with Airlanding 195th Field Ambulance and Fr. William Briscoe of Shrewsbury Diocese with 225th Parachute Field Ambulance.

The Royal Navy landed troops on the beaches under the cover of a tremendous ship to shore bombardment. Fr. Thomas Holland, a Liverpool priest and a Royal Navy chaplain, was aboard the accommodation ship *Ascanius* loaded with sailors destined to crew landing craft. He climbed down the side of a heaving ship on to a tossing landing craft while carrying his Mass kit and personal equipment. On landing he was given a tent next to a Beaufors gun emplacement and was the only Catholic chaplain in the area. For ministering to sailors and marines on assault vessels and as they landed under fire on Juno Beach, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for 'his gallantry, skill determination and undaunted devotion to duty during the Allied Forces on the coast of Normandy'.

Fr. Cyril 'Paddy' Crean of Dublin Diocese, Senior Chaplain to an armoured brigade of 1st Corps, waded ashore at Bernières-sur-Mer. In the same sector Fr. John Meagher of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, attached to 7th Armoured Division, was injured by strafing from enemy aircraft. Fr. James O'Sullivan, an Australian priest, landed with 6th Duke of Wellington's and administered the last rites to many men. Their position was so exposed that Fr. Sullivan referred to them 'as sitting ducks' and the battalion suffered so many casualties that it was withdrawn. Fr. Peter Firth of Lancaster Diocese had just waved to a soldier when he was shot and died instantly. He was buried by Fr. Michael Elcock of Shrewsbury Diocese in an orchard by the parish church of Hermanville-sur-Mer and was posthumously awarded the *Croix de Guerre*.

The Redemptorist Fr. Dan Cummings of Belfast was attached to 3rd Irish Guards. On landing they dug trenches under enemy shellfire. The wounded received medical attention and chaplains administered sacramental and material comfort. Fr. Cummings ministered to German wounded, some of whom were Waffen SS. As he cut away the blood stained tunic of one SS man, he found a primed grenade in the soldier's pocket. Such instances caused Fr. Cummings to ponder his future: 'If we are spared to return, we shall be all the better for the experience…Living close to death is an experience which changes your mind irrevocably…The years will not be long enough for us to thank God for his mercies.'

The 50th Division was the leading division of 1st Corps and one of its chaplains, Fr. Gerard Nesbitt of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, with the 8th Durham Light Infantry, was killed near Tilly on 5th July. He was awarded a posthumous *Croix de Guerre*.

Throughout July four more chaplains were wounded – Frs. Philip Dayer of Westminster Diocese, William Briscoe of Shrewsbury Diocese, Michael Murphy of Birmingham Diocese and Hugh Donaghey of Southwark Diocese.

The Breakout

The breakout took Allied forces into the *bocage* country where movement was difficult. 51st Highland Division, which had landed with 1st Corps, suffered heavily and two of its chaplains, Frs. George Conlon and James Graham of Glasgow Diocese, were wounded. For their ministrations to the Highlanders both were mentioned in dispatches. The Highlanders later liberated Lisieux and the Catholic contingent celebrated Mass in the shattered basilica. The church was completely bare except for its benches, but it was not destroyed and hundreds of locals had sheltered in its crypt.

In the struggle for Falaise Fr. Patrick McMahon, a Columban Missionary, went to rescue a wounded Canadian soldier but on the return journey his ambulance was hit by a shell, and he was killed on 14th August. He was buried in the churchyard at Ussy following a requiem Mass attended by 50 Allied chaplains. Meanwhile, Fr. J. F. Devine of Elphin Diocese was wounded.

The build-up of men and materiel created logistical problems but presented chaplains with opportunities to tender to their flocks in relatively close proximity. The breakout ended this arrangement and chaplains and troops moved all over Normandy. Fr. Denys Rutledge OSB of Fort Augustus, who had landed on D-Day + 3 on a truck loaded with explosives, noted that the breakout came as a great relief, but his workload increased tremendously. He was called by a French lady to re-

inter a dead British soldier whom she had buried in her garden. On 3rd September, he buried a sergeant killed in an attack on a German occupied house; celebrated Mass in a village school on the Somme by 'courtesy of a communist headmaster'; said vespers and Benediction at the church of St. Thibault; and in the evening held Benediction at Romescamps attended by 1,800 soldiers.

Following the withdrawal of the Duke of Wellingtons, Fr. O'Sullivan transferred to 1st Leicesters near the Escaut Canal close to Lille. On 14th September, his first night with the battalion, he was asked to carry out a communications duty which involved him speaking French. As he had no French Fr. O'Sullivan was replaced by Fr. Gerard Barry of Liverpool Diocese. Fr. Barry was killed whilst sheltering in a deserted farmhouse. Fr. Holland recalled Fr. Barry's premonition that he would be killed.

As naval units 'took root' along the coast, Fr. Holland's 'land parish' stretched from Ouistreham to Granville and he qualified for a motorcycle. Royal Navy casualties were not as heavy as army units and Fr. Holland noted that 'only a tiny fraction was called upon for the supreme sacrifice'. As the Allies moved in land so too did Fr. Holland. Near Bayeux he saw both General De Gaulle and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. At a more personal level he met Fr. Rick Slevin of Salford Diocese on the coast; 22 years later he presided at Fr. Slevin's requiem.

In his memoirs Bishop Holland paid tribute to the planning genius behind *Overlord* and the heroism of all the Allied forces. He also acknowledged the work of the padres and the 'supreme charity towards those who fell'. Fr. Holland became Bishop of Salford.

Lest We Forget

Fr. Peter Firth, died 7th June 1944, aged 33, buried in Hermanville War Cemetery
Fr. Gerard Nesbitt, died 5th July 1944, aged 33, buried in Jerusalem War Cemetery, Chouain
Fr. Patrick McMahon, died 14th August 1944, age unknown, buried in Ussy War Cemetery
Fr. Gerard Barry, died 14th September 1944, aged 33, buried in Geel War Cemetery

Fr. James Kenny



Fr. Gerard Barry



Fr. Paddy Crean



PRIESTS AND PRISONERS:

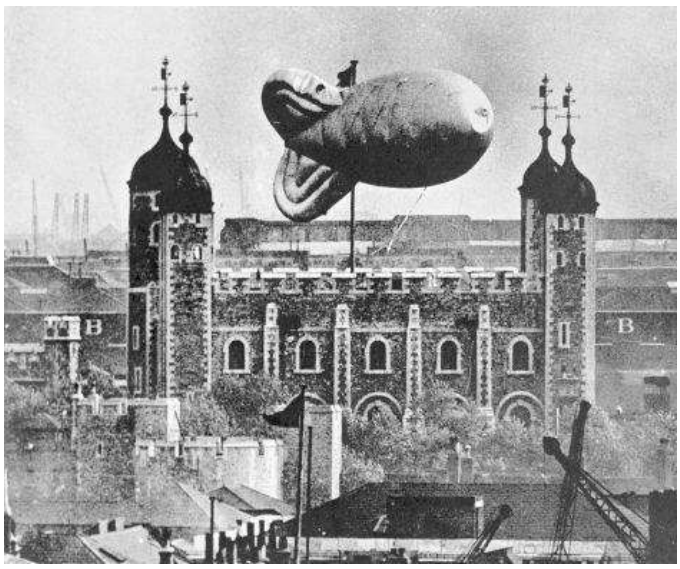
MINISTERING TO THE ENEMY IN WORLD WAR TWO

Written by Dr. James Hagerty

930 Catholic priests served as chaplains to British forces in World War 2. The majority served the Army but there were also chaplains to the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. Three of those who served as Army padres were from religious orders, Fr. Edward Griffith, an Oratorian, Fr. Clifford Howell, a Jesuit, and Fr. Denys Rutledge, a Benedictine. A common feature of their ministry was unique; they ministered to German prisoners but in very unusual circumstances.

On 31st January 1941, a plane left German-occupied Holland for England where a man parachuted from the aircraft. His name was Josef Jakobs, and his flight had taken him to Ramsey, Huntingdonshire. As he landed, breaking his ankle in the process, he was spotted by two farmers who notified the Home Guard and police who arrested him. He was taken to Canon Row Police Station, London, interrogated and charged with espionage.

In 1940, Jakobs joined the *Wehrmacht* working for the *Abwehr*, German intelligence. He claimed he came to England to escape the Gestapo who suspected him of Jewish sympathies and that he wished to use the Abwehr's network to flee Germany and help Britain. His story convinced no-one and, as a serving soldier, he was court-martialled. The charge was that he committed treachery 'in that he descended by parachute with the intention of helping the enemy'. It was revealed that when arrested he was in possession of a map, a wireless transmitter, a code book, an attaché case, forged identity papers, ration books, £500 in British currency, and a torch.



Jakobs was found guilty, sentenced to death by firing squad, and executed in the grounds of the Tower of London on 15th August 1941. He was the last person to be executed in the Tower of London and was buried in an unmarked grave in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green.

British authorities had stressed that access to such an important prisoner should be restricted but allowed him the service of a Catholic priest and the German-speaking Oratorian Fr. Edward Griffith was transferred from 4th British General Hospital, Knutsford, Cheshire, where he ministered to wounded German prisoners. Fr. Griffith, who joined the RAChD in October 1939, subsequently ministered to Jakobs, celebrated Mass for him, heard his confession, and gave him Holy Communion. He provided the prisoner with a chance to share his thoughts and feelings and write to his family. Although there is no evidence in army chaplaincy records, it is likely that the padre accompanied Jakobs to his execution and buried him. Fr. Griffith was deployed to North Africa in December 1942 and served various units until his demobilisation in October 1945.



In December 1944, some German officers hatched a plan to break out of their prisoner of war camp at Devizes, Wiltshire, seize weapons and tanks from a local depot, and march on London. The escape was to coincide with the German Ardennes offensive, and it was hoped that the 250,000 German POWs in Great Britain would also escape and disrupt the Allied advance in Europe by engaging British troops in Britain. Allied forces in Britain numbered less than 250,000 so the British government took the planned escape very seriously.

The perpetrators of the plan were sent to Comrie Camp in Scotland where hardline Nazis were held. Unfortunately, Sergeant Wolfgang Rosterg, a well-known anti-Nazi, was sent to Comrie by mistake. Other prisoners believed that he had informed the British of their plot and after a kangaroo court and a severe beating he was hanged in a latrine. Another prisoner, Gerhard Rettig, was beaten to death for his open criticism of the plan. Seven prisoners were tried for the offences and five were hanged at Pentonville Prison in November 1945.

The German-speaking Jesuit Fr. Clifford Howell was sent to minister to the Catholic accused in Pentonville. A padre since 1939 he was a veteran of Dunkirk, North Africa, Burma and recent European hostilities. He recalled that the prisoners received him warmly and seemed consoled to have the companionship of a Catholic priest who spoke their language. They related their parts in the execution of the perceived collaborators and believed they were doing right by their country and their military oath. Two Germans had betrayed their country, so they disposed of them according to their military traditions and expectations. Fr. Howell gave the last consolations of religion to men he considered to be staunch Catholics, patriots to their country and brave soldiers. He was demobbed on 20th July 1946.

Fr. Denys Rutledge, a monk of the Benedictine Abbey of Fort Augustus, was commissioned in 1939 and was a veteran of Dunkirk, Malta, Sicily, Italy, D-Day and the liberation of Europe. Throughout May 1945, Fr. Rutledge, attached to a Defence Company, ministered to units in the Lüneberg-Lübekke area.

The race to Berlin and the rush to capture Nazi war criminals had begun. One of the most wanted Nazis was Heinrich Himmler, Head of the SS and Gestapo, and the government issued orders that if caught he was to be eliminated immediately. For 24th May Fr. Rutledge's diary contains the following amazing entry "Himmler, the most feared and hated of the Nazi secret service commits suicide in the Defence Company office next my own at about 11.15 last night." Fr. Rutledge, suspecting that Himmler was a Catholic, had not been informed his capture, death and burial. He felt that being forbidden to minister even to war criminals was a denial of his priesthood. Fr. Rutledge was demobbed on 14th October 1945.



Fr. Griffith fulfilled his priestly duty to a man who posed a danger to Britain but his ministry to Jakobs was kept secret. Fr. Howell fulfilled his ministry to men guilty of murder and who presented military threats. His account was published in the Jesuit *Chaplains' Weekly*. Fr. Rutledge's was not allowed to minister to Himmler and his reserved nature meant that few knew of this unique experience or his wartime diary.

Many Catholics have been executed in the Tower of London. To English Catholics, it may seem ironic that Jakobs, the last person to be executed in the Tower, should be a Catholic who died not for his religion but for his country.



Fr. Edward Griffith Cong.Orat.



Fr. Clifford Howell SJ

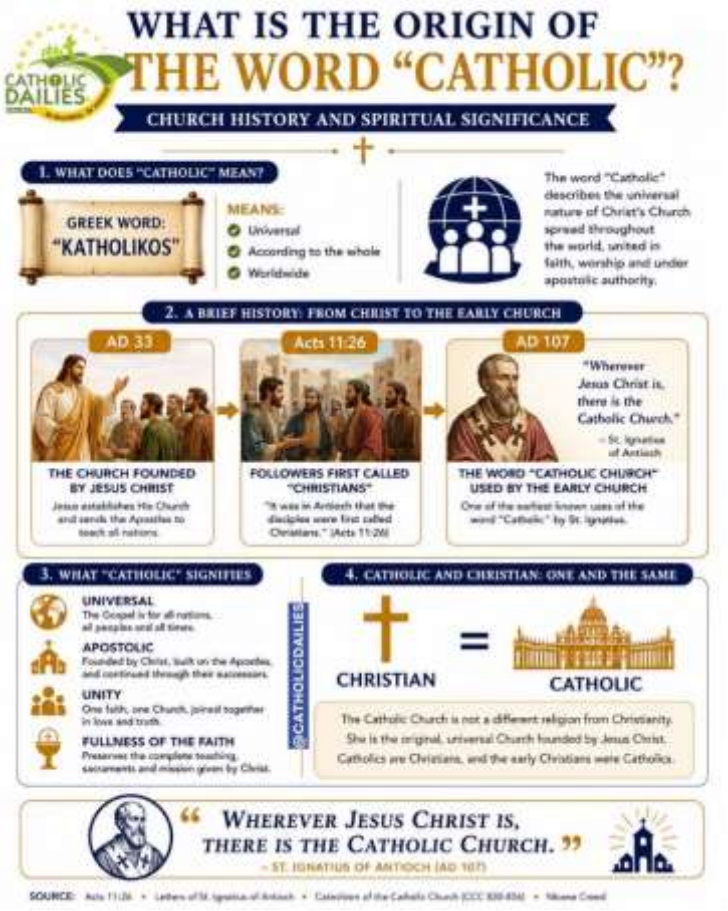


Fr. Denys Rutledge OSB

Understanding the Catholic Church: Its Signs, Symbols, Traditions, and Ministry

This regular feature aims to deepen our understanding of the rich life and heritage of the Catholic Church. In each issue, we will explore different aspects of Catholic faith and practice, including the meaning of sacred objects such as the monstrance, the structure and hierarchy of the Church, the role of chaplaincy, vocations, liturgical traditions, and other topics that help shape Catholic life and worship.

The information presented in this series is drawn from a range of reliable Catholic sources, including resources published by Catholic Dailies and Ignatius Catholicum and is intended to support faith formation and understanding within our Army Catholic community.





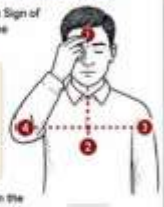
WHY IS THE SIGN OF THE CROSS A SACRAMENTAL?

Why the Church Calls Sacramentals Signs

1. WHAT IS THE SIGN OF THE CROSS?

When Catholics make the Sign of the Cross, they invoke the Holy Trinity:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Amen."



It is a profession of faith in the Holy Trinity and a reminder of Christ's saving Cross.

2. WHY IS IT A SACRAMENTAL?

Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church that prepare us to receive God's grace and help us cooperate with it.

- Expresses our faith
- Invokes God's blessing
- Reminds us of our Baptism
- Points to Christ's sacrifice
- Helps us prepare for God's grace

The Sign of the Cross is a sacred action that helps us turn our hearts and minds to God.

3. WHY DOES THE CHURCH CALL SACRAMENTALS "SIGNS"?



A sign points beyond itself to something greater.

Sacramentals point us to God and the spiritual realities He gives.

4. SACRAMENTALS ARE NOT ONLY OBJECTS

Many sacramentals are objects, but not all. The Church also recognizes actions, prayers, blessings, and gestures as sacramentals.

- Gestures (e.g. Sign of the Cross)
- Prayers (e.g. Prayer before meals)
- Blessings (e.g. Priest's blessing)
- Objects (e.g. Holy water, medals, rosaries)

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IN SUMMARY

The Sign of the Cross is a sacramental because it is a sacred sign used by the Church to express faith, invoke God's blessing, and dispose us to receive His grace.

Every time we make the Sign of the Cross, we proclaim the Trinity, remember the Cross, and renew our identity as followers of Christ.

Make it with faith. Make it with love.

"Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory." – **Luke 9:26**

CATHOLIC DAILIES

WHEN AND WHERE GENUFLECT, KNEEL AND BOW:

HIGHLIGHTING IN AND OUT OF LITURGIES

During the Liturgy and outside the Liturgy, the Church teaches us to use sacred gestures of reverence. Each gesture has a distinct meaning and is used at specific times and places.

1. GENUFLECTION

The act of bending one knee to the ground. It is primarily a gesture of adoration directed toward Jesus Christ truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.

WHEN WE GENUFLECT

OUTSIDE THE LITURGY

- Upon entering a church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle
- Before leaving the church
- During Eucharistic Adoration

DURING THE LITURGY

- The priest genuflects after showing the consecrated Host
- The priest genuflects after showing the Precious Blood
- The priest genuflects before Communion after elevating the Host

Other ministers follow the liturgical norms prescribed for their roles.

2. KNEELING

A gesture of prayer, humility, repentance, and adoration. It expresses our dependence on God and our reverence before His presence.

WHEN WE KNEEL

OUTSIDE THE LITURGY

- During personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
- During Eucharistic Adoration
- During private devotion in church
- During certain penitential prayers

DURING THE LITURGY

- In many countries, including those following the Roman Rite:
- During the Eucharistic Prayer after the Holy, Holy, Holy
- Until after the Great Amen

Local bishops' conferences may establish specific norms according to liturgical law.

3. BOWING

A bow is a gesture of reverence and honor. It is not primarily an act of adoration but of respect and veneration.

WHEN WE BOW

OUTSIDE THE LITURGY

- Before a crucifix
- Before sacred images or statues as a sign of reverence (not adoration)
- During personal devotional prayers

DURING THE LITURGY

BOW OF THE HEAD

Made at:

- The name of Jesus
- The name of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- The name of the saint being celebrated in the Mass

PROFOUND BOW

Made:

- During the Creed at the words "and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man."
- Before receiving a blessing when appropriate
- By the priest at specific moments of the Mass prescribed by the Missal

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4. WHY THE CHURCH USES THESE GESTURES

- TEACH REVERENCE: They help us recognize the holiness of God and sacred things.
- EXPRESS FAITH VISIBLY: Our bodies show what our hearts believe.
- UNITE BODY AND SOUL IN WORSHIP: They bring our whole being into prayer and worship.
- PRESERVE THE SACRED CHARACTER OF THE LITURGY: They help maintain reverence and the dignity of worship.

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IN SUMMARY

The Church uses three major gestures of reverence:

- GENUFLECTION – primarily for adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.
- KNEELING – for prayer, humility, repentance, and adoration.
- BOWING – for reverence, honor, and respect toward sacred persons, names, and mysteries.

When performed with understanding and devotion, they become silent acts of faith lit at speak louder than words.

TODAY, REFLECT:

"Do I perform these sacred gestures with intention and reverence, or merely out of habit?"

EVERY GESTURE OF REVERENCE IS AN ACT OF LOVE TOWARD GOD. Let our bodies express the faith that our hearts profess.

Be Prayerful. Be Inspired.

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PROPER MASS GESTURES:

WHAT THE CHURCH ACTUALLY ASKS OF THE CONGREGATION

The way we move at Mass is not random... it is prayer with the body.

1	THE SIGN OF THE CROSS (BEGINNING) • Make the Sign of the Cross reverently • Stand	A STAND	This marks the beginning of sacred worship.
2	PENITENTIAL ACT ("I CONFESS...") • Strike your breast at "through my fault..." • Stand	B STAND	This gesture expresses repentance.
3	GLORIA • Stand	C STAND	A hymn of praise to God.
4	LITURGY OF THE WORD First Reading & Psalm • Sit	D SIT	We listen to the Word of God.
5	GOSPEL • Stand • Make small crosses on: forehead, lips, heart (Signifying: "May the Word be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart")	E STAND	We honor the Gospel and ask God to dwell in our mind, on our lips, and in our heart.
6	HOMILY • Sit and listen attentively	F SIT	We listen to the teaching of the Church.
7	CREED • Stand • Bow at the words: "...and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate..."	G STAND & BOW	We profess our faith together. (Norm: GIRM 43)
8	PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL • Stand	H STAND	We pray for the needs of the Church and the world.
9	OFFERTORY • Sit (in most places)	I SIT	We prepare our hearts and gifts.
10	CONSECRATION (MOST IMPORTANT PART) • Kneel	J KNEEL	This is the moment Christ becomes truly present in the Eucharist. (Norm: GIRM 43)
11	OUR FATHER • Stand Note: The Church does not prescribe the congregation to raise hands. The recent pontiff is proper to the priest.	K STAND (Hands joined or folded)	We pray as one family of God.
12	SIGN OF PEACE • Offer peace simply and reverently • No walking around excessively • No prolonged greetings or distractions	L EXCHANGE PEACE SIMPLY	We share Christ's peace with others.
13	HOLY COMMUNION • Approach reverently • Bow before receiving • Receive on the tongue or in the hand (where permitted)	M RECEIVE REVERENTLY	We receive the Body and Blood of Christ.
13	FINAL BLESSING • Stand • Make the Sign of the Cross	N STAND	We are sent forth to live the Gospel. (Norm: GIRM 43)

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IN SUMMARY... A STAND (Respect) | B SIT (Listen) | C KNEEL (Adore) | D BOW (Reverence)

"Do my actions at Mass reflect the reverence I have for God?"
Reverence is not old-fashioned... it is the language of worship.

PROPER MASS ETIQUETTE

Important Do's and Don'ts During Holy Mass

✓ IMPORTANT DO'S

1. **ARRIVE EARLY** – Prepare your heart through prayer.
2. **MAINTAIN SILENCE** – Respect the church as a house of prayer.
3. **PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY** – Pray, sing, listen, and respond.
4. **DRESS RESPECTFULLY** – Reflect the sacredness of Holy Mass.
5. **OBSERVE LITURGICAL GESTURES** – Stand, sit, kneel, and bow reverently.
6. **PRAY AFTER COMMUNION** – Remain in thanksgiving to God.



@CATHOLICDAILIES

WHY MASS ETIQUETTE MATTERS

Mass is the highest act of worship in the Catholic Church. Reverent behavior helps us honor God, receive the Eucharist worthily, and assist others in prayer.

✗ IMPORTANT DON'TS

1. **DO NOT USE PHONES** – Silence devices before Mass.
2. **DO NOT HOLD LOUD CONVERSATIONS** – Avoid disturbing others who are praying. (NO LOUD)
3. **DO NOT DISTRACT OTHERS** – Maintain a spirit of reverence.
4. **DO NOT LEAVE IMMEDIATELY AFTER COMMUNION** – Remain until the final blessing.
5. **DO NOT RECEIVE COMMUNION IRREVERENTLY** – Follow Church norms and prepare properly.
6. **DO NOT TREAT CHURCH AS A SOCIAL HALL** – Remember that the church is a sacred place.

SCRIPTURE HIGHLIGHT

"My house shall be called a house of prayer." — Matthew 21:13

MASS ETIQUETTE IS NOT ABOUT JUDGING OTHERS. IT IS ABOUT LOVING GOD, RESPECTING THE EUCHARIST, AND HELPING OTHERS PRAY.

Be Prayerful. Be Inspired | © catholicdailies

Remembrance Quiz



1. How many British military chaplains were awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) for extreme gallantry under fire during the First World War?

2. Can you name them?

3. When the Two-Minute Silence was officially inaugurated by King George V in 1919, the first minute was dedicated to remembering the fallen. What was the explicit focus designated for the second minute?

4. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) strictly enforces the principle of equality in death. What specific restriction does this place on its standard headstones?

5. The iconic red remembrance poppy was inspired by John McCrae's poem *In Flanders Fields*. What ecological factor caused the poppies to bloom so rapidly on the battlefields?

6. The famous Kohima Epitaph ("*When you go home, tell them of us and say...*") is carved on memorials worldwide. Which English classicist originally composed these lines during WWI?

7. Who designed the Cenotaph in Whitehall?

8. What is the biggest WW1 memorial in the world?

9. Where is the largest military cemetery in the UK?

10. What is the Elizabeth Cross and who is it given to

Answers to The Saints Quiz - Issue 47: 1. St. Patrick, 2. Because someone's psalter was found following his prayer, 3. St. Jacinta de Marto, 4. He moved to the Island of Molokai to care for the leper colony there, 5. Coining the term "Catholic Church".

Answers to Newsletter Issue 48 will be published in Issue 49 or email Karen at: ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com

ROYAL ARMY CHAPLAINS' MUSEUM ANNUAL LECTURE



"Chaplaincy at the moral centre in difficult times"

Delivered by Al Murray

18TH NOVEMBER 2026 | 1830 HRS

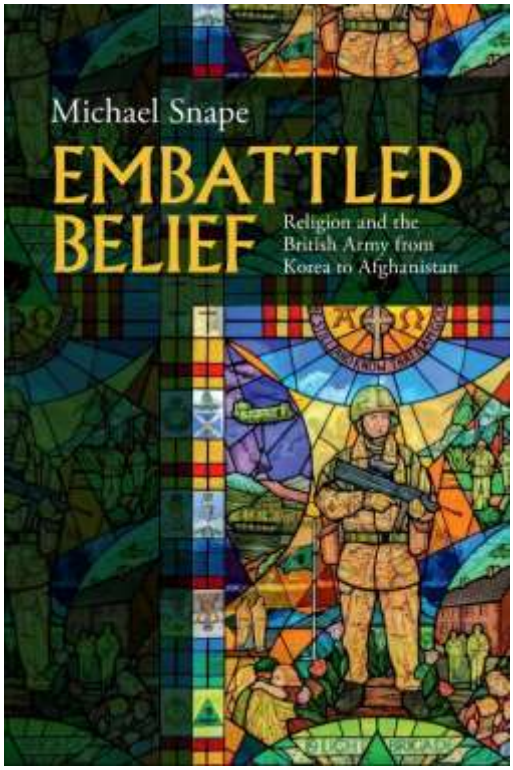
THE GUARDS' CHAPEL
Wellington Barracks
Birdcage Walk
London SW1E 6HQ

Tickets £5 available via Eventbrite
www.eventbrite.co.uk
Search: Royal Army Chaplains' Museum Annual Lecture

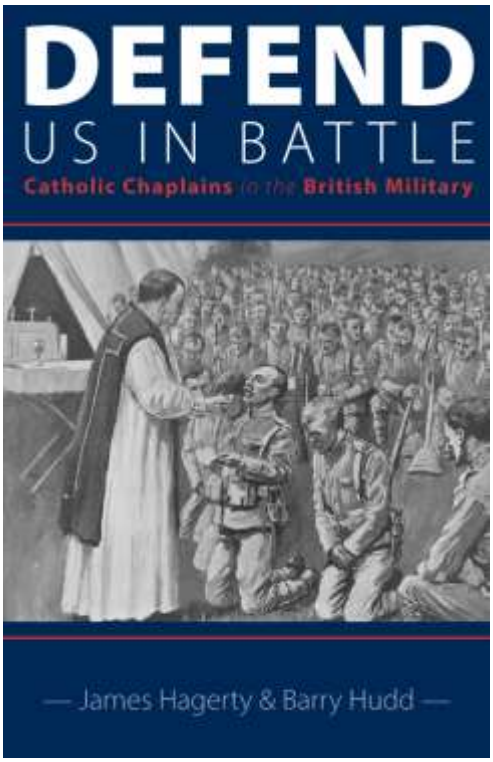
Donations to the Royal Army Chaplains' Museum can be made via Eventbrite or at the event

Royal Army Chaplains' Department

Literature of Interest



This landmark study of religion in the modern British Army, written by the museum's historical consultant, will be published next month. Drawing in part on the museum's archives, the book will be an indispensable guide for anyone interested in faith in the forces. https://assets.cambridge.org/97810096/09982/frontmatter/9781009609982_frontmatter.pdf



The Catholic Church has always had regard for the spiritual and pastoral welfare of those in the military and for centuries priests have ministered to armed forces personnel in war and in peace. The Old Testament records that priests accompanied those in battle and in the Christian era military chaplains have nobly carried forward this duty of service.

Historians have begun to examine in more detail the concept and conduct of military chaplaincy and *Defend Us In Battle* traces the growth and development of Catholic chaplaincy to British armed forces from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century.

Taking as its starting point the emergence of a recognized system of military chaplaincy established by the Society of Jesus in Reformation Europe, this wide-ranging survey considers the ministry of chaplains through succeeding centuries. It relates the struggles that Catholic soldiers and sailors endured with British officialdom before being granted their own chaplains.

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.

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. https://www.sacristy.co.uk/products/catholic-military-chaplains?_pos=1&_psq=Defend+us+in+Battle+&_psid=ad341bee3&_ss=e

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 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 Bishopric 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

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

www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/roles/chaplain

www.jobs.army.mod.uk/roles/royal-army-chaplains-department/chaplain/

www.recruitment.raf.mod.uk/roles/roles-finder/chaplaincy/chaplain

The Bishopric 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 Bishopric 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 Bishopric Of The Forces



O Lord Jesus Christ, instil in the hearts of priests and deacons 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 hours 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.

Waterways Chaplaincy
...coming alongside you

What is Spiritual Direction?



Are you facing a challenge or a big decision?

Are you feeling stuck or not sure what to do next?

Spiritual direction can help you during these times.

Spiritual direction is a special time where you can talk to someone about your thoughts, feelings, and faith. It's a bit like having a guide who helps you listen to God and notice how God is working in your life.

The aim is to have a closer relationship with God through prayer and how we live each day.

The person you talk to is called a *spiritual director*.

They won't tell you what to do, but they will help you find your way, understand your faith better, and grow in your friendship with God.

You can talk about anything, things that make you happy or sad, things that confuse you, or big questions about life and faith.

Everything you say is private and safe.



Please contact Karen - ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com for more details if this is something you would like to explore.

67th International Military Pilgrimage Lourdes 2027



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

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 November

All Saints
1st November (Solemnity)

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
8th November

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
9th November (Feast)

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
15th November

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
21st November (Memorial)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
22nd November (Solemnity)

1st Sunday in Advent
29th November

St Andrew, Apostle, Patron of Scotland
30th November (Feast)

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*