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Issue  
26

*" Love is a fruit in season at all times and within reach of every hand." Mother Teresa*



## *Army Roman Catholic Newsletter*



### *Welcome*

*From*

*The Revd. Fr. Ian Stevenson CF  
Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (Army)*



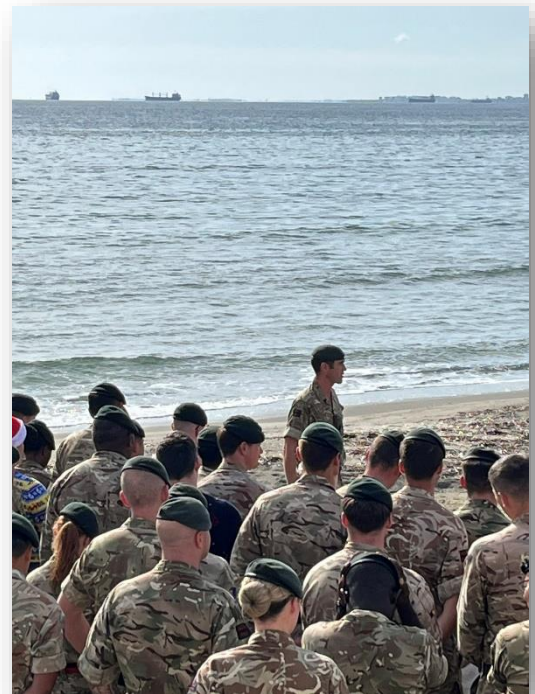
Happy New Year!

And welcome to Issue 26 of the Army Roman Catholic Newsletter.

The turning of the calendar not only marks the passage of time but also invites us to reflect on the profound journey of faith that binds us together. Within our faith community we find solace and strength, drawing inspiration from shared beliefs and the collective spirit that unites us. As we embrace the promise of a fresh beginning, let us also take a moment to express our gratitude for the blessings of the past year and to seek guidance for the adventures that lie ahead.

# *Ministry in Motion*

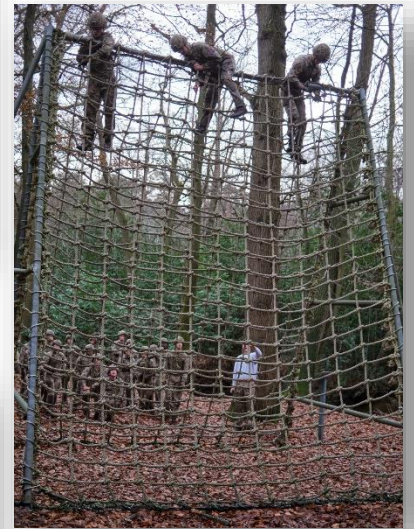
Father John Moriarty, Chaplain, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Rifles based at Alexander Barracks in Dhekelia, Cyprus, leads the carol service on the beach prior to the battalion standing down for their Christmas leave.



# *Ministry in Motion*



Father PJ O'Driscoll joins 1 RHA Regt for CO's Christmas PT



# Ministry in Motion

During the festive period, Fr. David Burke travelled with the crew and passengers of the Arvia. He shares his reflections of his recent travels.



With nearly 6000 guests and 2000 plus crew, P&O's newest and largest cruiseship - Arvia, travelled around the Caribbean during the Christmas and New Year period.



In addition to being the Catholic Chaplain at the Army Foundation College, Harrogate, I am also a trustee for Stella Maris, the Catholic church's outreach in support of seafarers who travel around the globe bringing us all we consume, and use, each day.

In this latter trustee role, I had the privilege and opportunity to accompany the Arvia and all onboard, around the Caribbean this Christmas and New Year. Over 16 days, starting from Barbados, we travelled across the Caribbean and visited the Isles of St Lucia, the Dominican Republic, St Maartin, Antigua, St Kitts, Martinique and Grenada.



As well as the unique chance to see this part of the world; each day, I celebrated mass every morning with passengers and as the day came to a close, I celebrated mass for the crew in their mess. Both liturgical experiences each day gave me a blessed opportunity to celebrate the coming of the Christ-child in a new and yet profound way.

For many of the Ariva crew (encompassing many Catholic countries around the world including the Philippines and India) the opportunity to receive the eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation gave much comfort for those who are on ship working away from their families and friends, often on 6-10 month contracts.



For me, personally, it was wonderful and humbling to be alongside these men and women of sea during the Christmas period.

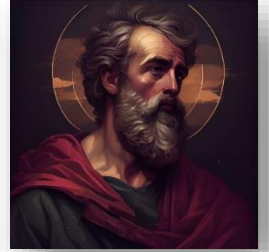


Please do keep all men and women who work at sea, throughout the world, in your prayers.

# The Conversion of St Paul

(25<sup>th</sup> January)

*For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective. Indeed, I have toiled harder than all of them; not I, however, but the grace of God [that is] with me. Therefore, whether it be I or they, so we preach and so you believed - 1 Corinthians 15:9-11*



Paul was born a Jew in the Roman city of Tarsus, in modern-day Turkey. On the eighth day, he was circumcised and received the Hebrew name Saul. At a young age, Saul began to study the Law of Moses in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, a member of the Sanhedrin and one of the most respected Pharisees and Doctors of the Law of his era. The Pharisees had enumerated 613 laws found within the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. Saul would have studied each of these laws carefully.

When Saul was in his early twenties, Jesus of Nazareth began His public ministry during which He challenged the rigid interpretations that the Pharisees taught about the Law of Moses. Jesus was crucified three years later when Saul was about twenty-five. Now a Pharisee himself, Saul was diametrically opposed to Jesus' teachings, believing that they were in opposition to the Law of Moses that he had come to know so well through the distorted lens of the pharisaical teachings. After Jesus' crucifixion, Saul zealously devoted himself to persecuting those who were Jesus' followers. Even when his own teacher, Gamaliel, recommended the followers of Jesus be ignored, Saul could not hold himself back.

The earliest documented martyrdom in the Church after Jesus' death took place with Saul's consent, when those who stoned Saint Stephen laid their cloaks at Saul's feet as Saul looked on. After that, Saul received a letter of permission from the high priest in Jerusalem to go beyond the city, searching from house to house to arrest those who followed Jesus, bringing them back in chains to stand trial in Jerusalem. As he took this letter of permission with him on a journey to Damascus, Saul had an experience that would not only change his life forever but also change the entire world.

"On his journey, as he was nearing Damascus, a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' He said, 'Who are you, sir?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting'" (Acts 9:3-5). With that, Saul was blinded and had to be led into the city of Damascus, where he stayed for three days, fasting, praying, and pondering this encounter.



In that city was a disciple of Jesus named Ananias. Ananias knew about Saul's persecution of the Church and feared him greatly. But Jesus appeared to Ananias and told him to go to Saul, lay his hands on him, heal him, and baptise him. Jesus explained that "this man is a chosen instrument of mine to

carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and Israelites, and I will show him what he will have to suffer for my name" (Acts 9:15-16). Ananias did as he was instructed, and Saul listened, converted, was baptised, and began a new life as an apostle of the Lord Jesus. Eventually Saul began to use his Roman name "Paul" rather than his Hebrew name "Saul."

Our feast today not only celebrates Saint Paul, it specifically celebrates his conversion. Think about that glorious conversion. Those three days that Saul spent in Damascus after encountering Jesus on the road changed his life. During those three days, he pondered Jesus' words, fasted, prayed, listened, thought, and changed. Facing the truth within his soul might not have been easy, but he did it. From that time on, the zeal that he had poured into persecution became zeal for the spreading of the Gospel.



The first three years after his conversion were spent in Arabia, perhaps in prayer, study, and preparation for his new mission. God used this time of solitude to bring about a deeper conversion in Saul's heart and to form him into a powerful instrument. After three years, he returned to Damascus and then continued to travel far and wide, proclaiming Jesus as the Christ. Over the approximately twenty-seven years that followed, Paul arguably became the greatest evangelist in the history of the world. At least thirteen of the

twenty-seven New Testament books are traditionally attributed to Paul, providing us with much of what we know about Jesus. His letters are not only historical in nature, they are also rich in theology, providing the most sturdy foundation for all that we believe as Christians today. Paul personally founded more than a dozen Christian communities during his missionary travels, but the members of those communities then went forth to found many more, making Paul not only a spiritual father to many early Christians but also a spiritual grandfather to countless others. He was tireless in his efforts, despite enduring much suffering:

*Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I passed a night and a day on the deep; on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own race, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, dangers among false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many sleepless nights, through hunger and thirst, through frequent fastings, through cold and exposure (2 Corinthians 11:25-27).*

In his mid-fifties, Paul was arrested and spent years in prison. Being a Roman citizen, he appealed to Rome and was eventually sent there for trial. In Rome, he suffered martyrdom at around the age of sixty, possibly as a result of the persecutions of the Emperor Nero. Though we do not know for certain how he died, tradition states that he was beheaded with a sword.

It's easy to see Saint Paul in the bright light of all that he accomplished. But one truth we must never forget is that he was only a man. He was a man who experienced a profound conversion and dedicated the rest of his life to the will of God.

# The Presentation of the Lord

(2<sup>nd</sup> February)



*When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord," and to offer the sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord -Luke 2:22-24*

Mary and Joseph were faithful Jews who obeyed the Law of Moses. Jewish Law prescribed that two ritual acts needed to take place for a firstborn son. First, the mother of a newborn son was ritually unclean for seven days, and then she was to "spend thirty-three more days in a state of blood purity" (Leviticus 12). During these forty days she was not to "touch anything sacred nor enter the sanctuary till the days of her purification are fulfilled." For this reason, today's feast has at times been called the "Purification of Mary." Second, the father of the firstborn son was to "redeem" the child by making an offering to the priest of five shekels so that the priest would then present the child to the Lord (Numbers 18:16). Recall that the firstborn male of all the Egyptians, animals and children, was killed during the tenth plague, but the firstborn males of the Israelites were spared. Thus, this offering made for the firstborn son in the Temple was a way of ritually redeeming him in commemoration of protection during that plague. Since Jesus was presented in the Temple for this redemption, today's feast is now referred to as the "Presentation in the Temple."

"Candlemass" is also a traditional name given to today's feast because as early as the fifth century, the custom of celebrating this feast with lighted candles had developed. The lit candles symbolized Simeon's prophecy that Jesus would be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles." Lastly, this Feast has been referred to as the "Feast of the Holy Encounter" because God, in the Person of Jesus, encountered Simeon and Anna in the Temple.



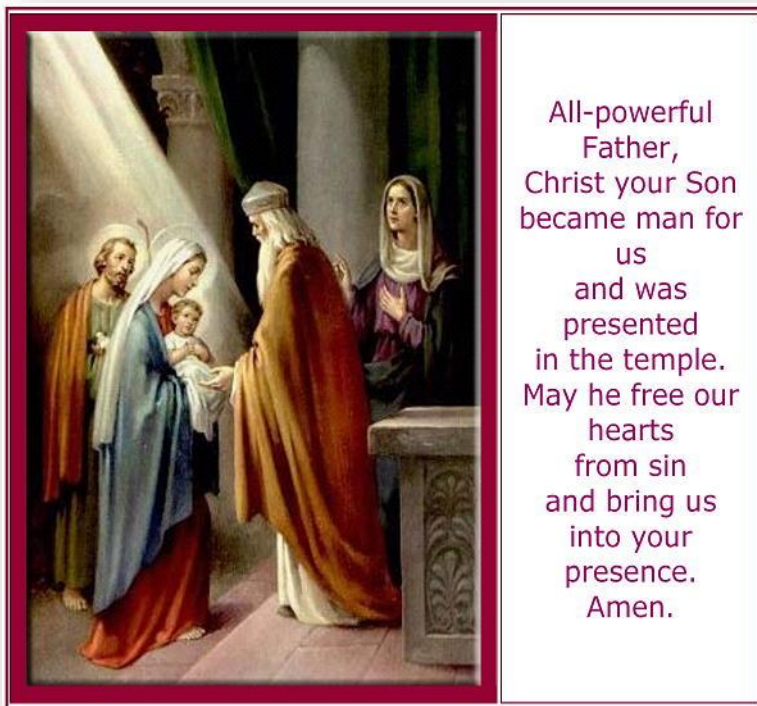


Today's feast is celebrated in our Church forty days after Christmas, marking the day that Mary and Joseph would have brought Jesus into the Temple. Though Mary was pure and free from sin from the moment of her conception, and though the Son of God did not need to be redeemed, Mary and Joseph fulfilled these ritual obligations.

At the heart of this celebration is the encounter of Simeon and Anna with the Christ Child in the Temple. It is in that holy encounter that Jesus' divinity is manifested by a human prophet for the first time. At His birth, the angels proclaimed His divinity to the shepherds, but in the Temple, Simeon was the first to understand and proclaim Jesus as the Saviour of the World. He also prophesied that this salvation would be accomplished by a sword of sorrow that would pierce the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Anna, a prophetess, also came forward and "gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). Thus, these ritual acts were also a moment in which Jesus' divine mission was made manifest to the world.

As we celebrate Mary's ritual purification and Jesus' ritual redemption, we should see them as acts in which we are called to participate. First, each of us is unworthy of entering the true Temple of the Lord in Heaven. Yet we are invited to enter that Temple in union with Mary, our Blessed Mother. It was her consent to the will of God that opened the door of God's grace to us all, enabling us to spiritually become Jesus' "mother" by allowing Him to be born in our hearts by grace. With her, we are now able to appear before God, purified and holy in His sight.

We must also see Saint Joseph redeeming us as he presented Jesus in the Temple. In offering Christ Jesus to the priest to offer Him to the Father, Saint Joseph also presents all who strive to live in union with Jesus. The hope is that, like Simeon and Anna, others will see God alive within us and experience the Saviour of the World through us.





1. Complete this quote from the book of Matthew: "Ye are the ..... Of the earth"
2. Who had a Damascene conversion?
3. Who lived on locusts and wild honey?
4. Who was the father of Issac?
5. The line "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down" appears in which book?
6. Who was the father of the apostles James and John?
7. Who would "not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ?"
8. Which one of the gospel writers was a tax collector?
9. Who betrayed Samson to the Philistines?
10. In which book is the line "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end"?

Answers to Newsletter Issue 26 will be published in Issue 27 or email Karen at: [ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com](mailto:ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com)

Answers to Newsletter Issue 25: 1. Angel Gabriel, 2. Caesar Augustus, 3. The Virgin Mary, 4. Luke, 5. Matthew, 6. Herod, 7. Jacob, 8. Isaiah, 9. Matthew, 10. O Come all ye faithful, 11. That glorius song of old, 12. For Jesus Christ our saviour was born on Christmas Day, 13. The Immaculate Conception, 14. St Andrew, 15. Scotland, 16. St Francis Xavier, 17. St Jane Frances de Chantal, 18. St Lucy, 19. Quirinius, 20. Psalm 95.

# 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 each individual.

**# 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.



## *Chrism Mass*

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 1200 hrs**

The annual Chrism Mass brings together the Bishop, Priests and Deacons and Lay People of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force to celebrate the blessing of the oils of Catechumens, Chrism and the Sick. The Chaplains will renew their priestly vows and commitment in front of the people.

Further details can be obtained from:

**Mrs Diane Restall, Tel: 01252 348234 or Email: [Dianerestall654@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Dianerestall654@mod.gov.uk)**

Event >>>

# *Annual Mass for Deceased Chaplains Westminster Cathedral*

*1<sup>st</sup> May 2024*



Event >>>

# *International Military Pilgrimage Lourdes 2024*



The UK Contingent will depart for the International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes on Thursday 23rd May 2024, returning Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

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 Tangley Tours, Pilgrim House, Station Road, Borough Green, Kent TN15 8AF.  
Tel: 01732 886666

## *Bishopric of The Forces Retreats*

Are you in need of stillness and sanctuary? The Bishopric of the Forces is offering 4 opportunities to go on a retreat in 2024. The retreats are open to all MOD personnel (Regular, Reserve and Civil Servant); immediate dependants will be considered dependent upon the availability of places. Applications from junior ranks are particularly encouraged.

For 2024, Douai Abbey in Berkshire, Worth Abbey in West Sussex, Ampleforth Abbey in North Yorkshire and St Mary's, Kinnoull in Perthshire.



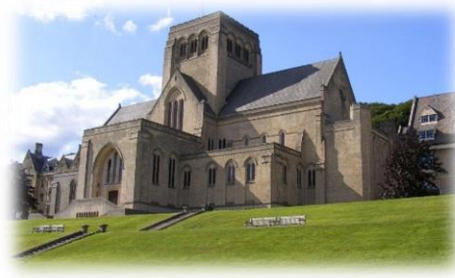
**ST MARYS KINOULL 29 APR - 2 MAY 24**



**DOUAI ABBEY 23 - 28 JUN 24**



**WORTH ABBEY 14 - 17 OCT 24**



**AMPLEFORTH ABBEY 11 - 14 Nov 24**

The retreats are aimed at all levels of faith and knowledge, age groups, backgrounds, ranks and experiences. They will allow participants to challenge their preconceptions in a relaxed and non-judgmental environment. All venues offer a unique opportunity to take a fresh look at faith away from the pressures of everyday service life. The retreats aim to promote and foster spiritual and moral values from a faith perspective thus contributing to professional and personal development as well as serving to strengthen the moral component of the application of military force.

Further details can be found on the Defence Instructions and Notices: DIN 2022DIN01-013  
Alternatively, please contact to register your interest or to receive further information:

Wg Cdr (Retd) Jem Wynne, Pastoral Administrative Assistant to the RAF Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain. Tel: 07834609153 Email: [rafprccpastoralassistant457@outlook.com](mailto:rafprccpastoralassistant457@outlook.com)





## Key Dates in January & February

St Anthony, Abbot (Memorial) – *17<sup>th</sup> January*

St Francis de Sales, Bishop, Doctor of the Church  
(Memorial) – *24<sup>th</sup> January*

The Conversion of St Paul (Feast) – *25<sup>th</sup> January*

Ss Timothy & Titus, Bishops  
(Memorial) – *26<sup>th</sup> January*

St John Bosco, Priest (Memorial) – *31<sup>st</sup> January*

The Presentation of the Lord (Feast) – *2<sup>nd</sup> February*

St Agatha, Virgin, Martyr (Memorial) – *5<sup>th</sup> February*

St Paul Miki & Companions, Martyrs  
(Memorial) – *6<sup>th</sup> February*

St Scholastica, Virgin (Memorial) – *10<sup>th</sup> February*

An excellent website with weekly reflections on all the upcoming Sunday readings can be found at:  
<https://www.tarsus.ie/>

## CATHOLIC MILITARY ASSOCIATION the official network for Defence Catholics



We exist to support Catholics in the UK Armed Forces.

We are a lay association of the faithful whose members cooperate to support Catholicism in the UK Armed Forces. We strive to inspire one-another in the Faith, to grow through prayer and the sacraments, and to offer up our sufferings, persevering together in the universal call to holiness.

We are the official Defence Catholic Association, formally approved by the Right Reverend Paul Mason, Bishop of the Forces. We are a member of the Defence Christian Network.

We are serving personnel, helping others. Find us at: <https://www.catholicmilitaryassociation.org.uk/>

## Information.....

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