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"It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus open doors of hope."  
Pope Benedict XVI



ARMY

## Army Roman Catholic Newsletter



Current topics >>>



### Welcome

From

The Revd Fr Paschal J Hanrahan CF  
Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (Army)



As we enter the season of Advent, let us prepare our hearts, minds and homes for the birth of Christ. It is the time for our faith communities and families to think about what the true meaning of Jesus' birth means through prayer, reflection and acts of kindness. It is a time of hope and love. May God truly bless you and I wish you all a Happy Christmas.

## Advent

Advent is a really special time of the year that sometimes can be pushed aside in the modern day run up to Christmas. But, it is an important point in the church calendar as, the first day of Advent is the first day of the new liturgical year. It also starts a four week period of preparation in anticipation of the nativity of Jesus at Christmas. Historically, the world waited for the coming of a Saviour who would redeem humanity and restore their relationship with God. This is, of course, what happened with the birth of Jesus and from that event particular characteristics have developed for the advent season such as:

Hopeful longing

Prayerful penance

Joyful expectation

Spiritual preparation

Advent begins on the Sunday nearest the feast of St Andrew on the 30<sup>th</sup> November and ends on 24<sup>th</sup> December. Christmas then follows from 25<sup>th</sup> December until Epiphany on the 6<sup>th</sup> January. Epiphany, commemorates the Magi's visit to the baby Jesus.

Advent and Christmas have many popular traditions. One of the most significant ways to celebrate Advent is with an Advent wreath. The wreath and candles are full of symbolism attached to the Christmas season. Wreaths are generally made of various evergreens which signifies continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolises the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul and the everlasting life we find in Christ. The individual evergreens have their own meanings that have been adapted to our faith. The laurel denotes victory over persecution and suffering. The pine, holly and yew signify immortality and the cedar signifies strength and healing. The pine cones that decorate the wreath symbolise life and resurrection. The wreath as a whole is meant to remind us of both the immortality of our souls and God's promise of everlasting life to us through Christ.



The candles included with the wreath also have their own significance. The four weeks of Advent are represented by four candles and one candle is lit each Sunday. Three of the candles are purple, which is a liturgical colour that signifies a time of prayer, penance and sacrifice.

The first candle, which is purple, symbolizes hope. It is sometimes known as the 'Prophecy Candle' in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who prophesied the birth of Christ (Isaiah 9:6). It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Saviour.



The second candle, which is also purple, represents faith. It is called the 'Bethlehem Candle' and reminds us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-5).

The third candle is pink, the liturgical colour for joy. It is called the 'Shepherd's Candle'. The third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday and reminds us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus.



The fourth candle, again purple, and known as the 'Angel's Candle' marks the final week of prayer and penance as we wait for the birth of our redeemer. It symbolises peace and reminds us of the message of the angels: "Peace on Earth, Good Will Towards Men" (Luke 2:14)

In more modern times, there is often a white candle placed in the centre of the wreath. This candle is called the 'Christ Candle' and represents the life of Christ. The colour white is for purity, because Christ is our sinless and pure Saviour. This candle is lit on Christmas Eve.





## Christmas

This is the message  
We have heard from Him  
And proclaim to you  
That God is light  
And in Him  
Is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:5

For Christians all over the world, 'Christmas' is the time to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, the son of God. It is a time for us to understand the lessons from Jesus and reflect upon them. Jesus renewed our faith based on love and compassion and restored our faith in God, a God full of compassion and forgiveness and positivity.

You may have heard the more modern phrase 'Jesus is the reason for the season'. It may come across as a flippant commercial slogan but, actually, there is complete truth in it's words. It is a large part of the foundations of our faith; 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son' (John 3:16). Jesus' birth was also a fulfilment of scripture from the Old Testament that predicted his coming. The prophet Isaiah states in 7:14 - "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" It is said that these words were written over 700 years before Christ's birth. Written over 800 years ago, Micah 5:2 tells us the place that Jesus will be born: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."



Peace on earth.  
Good will  
toward  
all.

Christmas is also a time of hope, love and life. It is a time when families and friends feel it is important to gather together and share their love. It is also a time when individuals feel more inclined to help and support those who are in need. Charities say that during the Christmas period they receive more donations than any other time of the year. In the teachings of Jesus, he set the example by serving others as well as teaching us how to love one another.



# Synodal Pathway

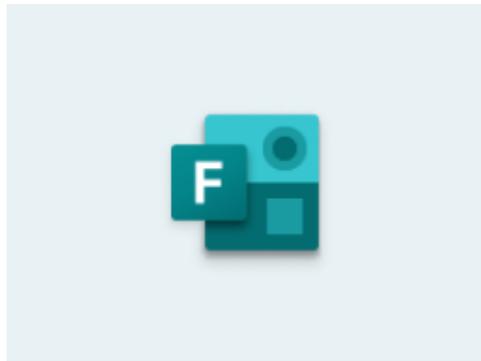


The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has launched a two-year global consultation process with the aim as he describes it of “looking others in the eye and listening to what they have to say.” This type of consultation, known as a “synod”, was common in the first centuries of the Christianity giving bishops the opportunity to meet and discuss issues of importance for the life of the Church and thereby try to discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Your perspective is important and the Church would like hear your views in response to a number of questions you will find on the attached survey. Please take a moment to look at the survey and answer any or all of the questions as you see fit.

With many thanks for your interest. *Bishop Paul Mason, Bishop of the Forces.*

<https://forms.office.com/r/MYhUSjQV8h>



## [Fill | Synod 2021 2023](https://forms.office.com/r/MYhUSjQV8h) [Bishopric of the Forces](#)

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has called for a Synodal Process to begin in the Dioceses of the world in October 21. This survey aims to collect information for the Roman Catholic Bishopric of the Forces to feed into the global response. Your voice is important and we want it to be heard. Please take the time to complete this survey which is anonymous. We would be grateful for your responses by Monday 17th January 2022.

[forms.office.com](https://forms.office.com/r/MYhUSjQV8h)

For further interest and information, go to the Vatican News via the following link:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-05/synod-of-bishops-will-begin-in-the-local-churches.html>

# Remembrance Roundup



Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday are always a busy times for our military chaplains. They attend services and parades all round the globe. Here are a few photographs from some of those events this year.



Fr. Paschal Hanrahan, PRCC(A) conducting the Armistice Day Service  
11 Nov 2021 at Headquarters, 3<sup>rd</sup> (UK) Division



Fr Kevin Dow, Unit Chaplain 30 R. Sigs Regt conducting the  
Armistice Day Service 11 Nov 2021 at Bramcote



Fr. John Moriarty, Unit Chaplain 1 RHA, conducting the Armistice Day  
Service 11 Nov 2021 at Larkill



© Crown copyright 2021. Bishop Paul Mason, Bishop of the Forces at the Cenotaph, London 14 Nov 2021



Fr. Kevin Dow, the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire & his wife, the Mayor of Nuneaton & Bedworth & his wife, OC Support Squadron & the Gurkha Major



Veteran Chaplains

Fr. Donald Cumming & Fr. Alex Strachan celebrate Remembrance Sunday in the Parish of St Thomas' Glasgow.

# Requiem Mass for the Fallen Westminster Cathedral Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021



Fr. Paul McCourt

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November, Remembrance Sunday, a Requiem Mass was celebrated for the fallen at Westminster Cathedral. His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Fr. Paul McCourt (who is one of our Army Chaplains based at Leconfield) concelebrated. The Mass was attended by all the Services as well as the civilian community.



His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols & Fr. Paul McCourt  
With King's Troop RHA in the background

# Around the Churches

## *Our Lady Queen of Peace, Bulford Camp*



Left to Right: Joy Stuart, Diane Restall (Secretary to the Bishop of the Forces) Fr. Michael Fava

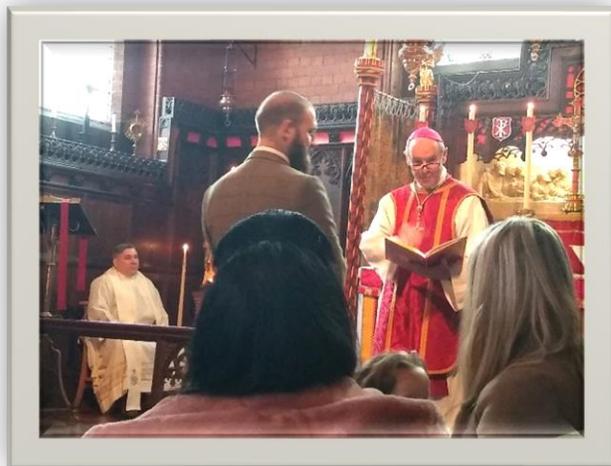
On the 21<sup>st</sup> November, the congregation of Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Bulford Camp, Salisbury Plain, welcomed back Fr. Michael Fava who celebrated Mass. Fr. Michael left the Army last year after 23 years of service. A presentation was made to Fr. Michael, thanking him for his long-time support on Salisbury Plain as an Army Chaplain. Fr Michael received a painting of himself in his last appointment (Deputy Chaplain General & Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain Army) and a hamper from the congregation and church. We send him our best wishes and prayers as he takes up his new parish at St. Joseph's in Newbury, Berkshire in the New Year.

## *St George's Church, Whittington Barracks, Lichfield*



Bishop Paul Mason, Mr Blake Roberts, Mrs Kristina Roberts, their 2 children and Mrs Samantha Roberts

The 3<sup>rd</sup> of November saw Blake Christopher Joseph Roberts receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Paul Mason. Blake's sponsor was his wife, Mrs Kristina Roberts. Our congratulations and prayers go with Blake on his faith journey.



Fr Ian Stevenson, Blake Roberts and Bishop Paul Mason  
Mrs Samantha Roberts, Mrs Kristina Roberts

## *National Memorial Arboretum 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021*



Left to Right: CG, Revd. Andrew Barton, Fr. David Burke, Revd. Ian Fowler, Revd Martin Robbins, Revd. Martin Wainwright

Several Chaplains, including our newest RC Chaplain, Fr. David Burke received his commission by the Chaplain General, Venerable Clinton Langston CB QHC CF at the Annual Chaplain's Memorial Day, held at the National Memorial Arboretum on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 .

# PQO COURSE – ARMY RC CHAPLAINS

## SEP – NOV '21

The passing out parade for Commissioning Short Course 213 took place at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Fr. David Burke is our newest RC Chaplain to Commission and complete training. Many congratulations and prayers go with him for his future ministry within the military.



Fr David Burke & PRCC(A) Fr. Paschal Hanrahan



Bishop Paul Mason & Fr David Burke



Left to Right: Deputy Chaplain General, Rev Mike Parker, Fr. David Burke, Revd Andrew Barton, Revd Ian Fowler, PRCC(A) Fr. Paschal Hanrahan



Mrs Carol Galloway, Dcn Neil Galloway, Bishop Paul Mason, Fr. David Burke

# FUNDRAISING NEWS

This October saw Father Stephen Sharkey and Mrs Karen Horn physically challenge themselves in order to raise funds for very worthwhile causes.

Father Stephen had applied for the London marathon earlier in the year but unfortunately, was unsuccessful in securing a space. However, his perseverance paid off and he ran the Virtual London Marathon on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Starting at 0115 hrs, he ran his marathon through the night wearing a head torch! Fr. Stephen's next Marathon is the Nice Marathon on 28<sup>th</sup> November. We wish him much luck!



Father Stephen, one of our serving Chaplains, is raising money for two charities:



**SSAFA** - The Armed Forces Charity. Providing Lifelong Support & Advice To Servicemen, Veterans & their Families. Support For Those Serving.



**Mary's Meals** provides chronically hungry children with one meal every school day, encouraging education that can lift them out of poverty in later life.

To read Father Stephen's story, see updates, and donate if you feel you would like to, please follow this link to the Virgin Money Website: [Virgin Money Giving Virtual 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon](#)

On the 31<sup>st</sup> October, Karen Horn, who is Pastoral Assistant to the Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (Army), also achieved a marathon however, instead of running she rowed on an indoor rowing machine.

Karen is raising funds for Brain Tumour Research:



Brain Tumour Research is a UK-based medical research charity dedicated to funding research, raising awareness of brain tumours. The charities vision is to find a cure for brain tumours of all kinds.



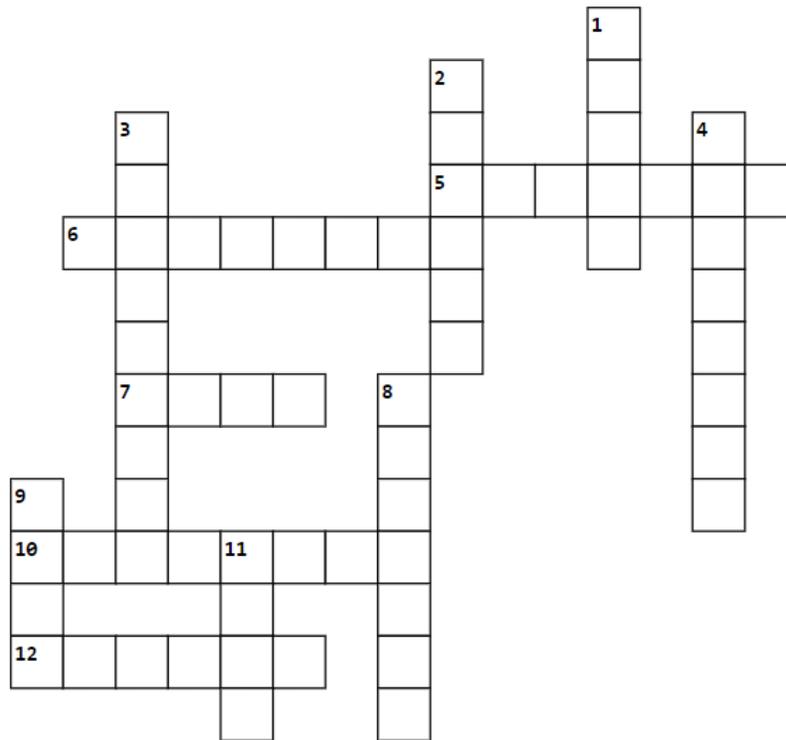
To read Karen's story, see updates, and donate if you feel you would like to, please follow this link to her Just Giving page :

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/karen-horn-mbe>





## Christmas Crossword Number: 5



### Across

5. Who appeared to Mary saying she was with child? (7)
6. In which town was Mary when the angel appeared to her? (8)
7. In which gospel do we learn about the birth of Jesus? (4)
10. Who told Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem? (8)
12. Who was the prophet that foretold a virgin shall give birth to a son called Immanuel? (6)

### Down

1. Magi brought three gifts for the baby Jesus. These were Gold, Frankincense and what other? (5)
2. Approximately, how many miles did Mary and Joseph have to travel to get to Bethlehem? (6)
3. With what did Mary wrap new-born Jesus? (9)
4. Which direction did the wise men travel, going to Jerusalem? (8)
8. Christ is a Greek word, what is the equivalent word in Hebrew? (7)
9. An alternative name for the wise men? (4)
11. What guided the wise men to find Jesus? (4)

Answers to Newsletter Issue 8/9 will be published in Issue 10 or email Karen at: [ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com](mailto:ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com)

Answers to Newsletter Issue 7: Valentine - I'm in love, Dymphna - Aiding Mental Health, Peter - Only on Fridays, Francis - Ecologically Friendly, Agatha - Sweet & Buzzy, Lucy - Cannot see where I am going? Cecilia - I love to sing! Jude - They say I am a lost cause! Anthony - Lost and Found perhaps?, Brigid - Fancy an Irish beer? Gabriel - Direct phone line? Teresa - I have a migraine? Rita - We need help with our marriage, Catherine - Put the fire out! Bernadette - I'm not feeling well.

Event >>>

# Camino de Santiago

The Camino de Santiago, known in English as the Way of St. James, is a network of pilgrims' ways or pilgrimages leading to the shrine of the apostle Saint James the Great in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain, where tradition holds that the remains of the apostle are buried.

## RC Bishopric of the Forces Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage 15 - 22 September 2022



For more information or to request an application form please contact  
Padre Neil Galloway.

[Neil.Galloway101@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Neil.Galloway101@mod.gov.uk)

## ***Bishopric of The Forces Retreats***

Are you in need of stillness and sanctuary? Scripture gives us many examples of our Lord Jesus withdrawing from noise and bustle to pray and to gain respite (Mark 3:7, Luke 5:16). Subject to Government restrictions, there is the opportunity to find that same peace at one of the Bishopric of the Forces Retreats planned for 2022:

To express an interest or to receive an application form, contact:

[Caroline.Routledge475@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Caroline.Routledge475@mod.gov.uk) or [rafprccpastoralassistant457@outlook.com](mailto:rafprccpastoralassistant457@outlook.com)



Douai Abbey, Berkshire 15 - 18 Mar 22 (TBC)



Belmont Abbey, Herefordshire 20 - 23 Jun 22 (TBC)



Worth Abbey, West Sussex 3 - 7 Oct 22 (Confirmed)



Ampleforth Abbey, North Yorkshire 28 Nov - 1 Dec 22 (Confirmed)



## Key Dates in December & January

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – 5<sup>th</sup> December  
Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary –  
8<sup>th</sup> December  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent – 12<sup>th</sup> December  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – 19<sup>th</sup> December  
The Nativity of the Lord – 25<sup>th</sup> December  
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph – 26<sup>th</sup>  
December  
Mary, the Holy Mother of God – 1<sup>st</sup> January  
The Epiphany of the Lord – 6<sup>th</sup> January  
Baptism of the Lord – 9<sup>th</sup> January

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 Administrative Assistant (PAA) to PRCC(A) at: [ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com](mailto:ArmyRCPAA21@gmail.com)