



## CAAPA NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2020

Hello everyone,

We hope this finds all our members and families, friends and loved ones continuing in health and safety during this interminably uncertain period.

The appeal for playlets on our theme **Action for the Church in Need** is starting to bear fruit as scripts are beginning to arrive, but we haven't yet received a number sufficient for an evening's performance. Please be **creative** during the lockdown and send in those works of drama! (*We still cannot confirm that the planned evening will happen at the CAA in November yet, as the building remains closed. But it will happen eventually!*)).

Work is taking place to bring our website up to date. If you have any suggestions to make it more attractive and welcoming, please send us them. My email is: [kennethmichaels@hotmail.com](mailto:kennethmichaels@hotmail.com)

We start with our Memorial Book:

\*\*\*\*\*

### MEMORIAL LIST FOR SEPTEMBER

2005 Sir Harold Hood BT KSG, Vice President

--- Mary Remnant DSG FSA

\*\*\*\*\*

**Michael Slater** writes:

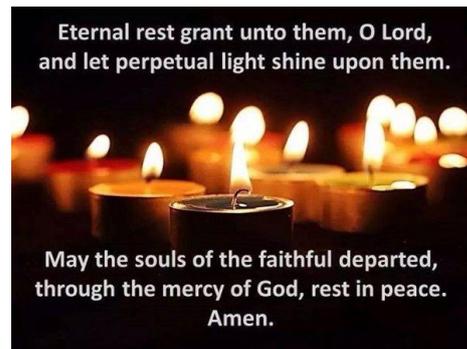
*Sir Harold was a very supportive Vice President. Although I never met him, I was very much aware of his kindness over the years. If ever there was a charity event to raise funds, two bottles of lovely wine would arrive from Sir Harold at Corpus Christi!! Sir Harold was, for many years, very involved with the Catholic Herald newspaper.*

**Mary Remnant DSG FSA** was an English musician, scholar, musicologist and medievalist. She was a leading figure in the **Early music revival** in the United Kingdom. (*A full appreciation of her involvement with CaAPA will appear next month.*)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Our Master of Ceremonies Michael Slater writes about his recent audition experience:*

Any casting at the present moment seems to be self-tape from home! I am very lucky that my daughter Katy, an actress, can help me with the filming and send the tapes off for me to the casting directors. Great joy the other evening, 'Dad, you have a recall. At 10 am Newman Street, near Goodge Street.' At last "freedom!" I was awake at 6.30am and left home at 8am to make my way by bus. I was at the casting by 9.40am, as I make it a rule to have time to make sure I know where it is.





# Catholic Association of Performing Arts

It was great to be in the room with people who were not on zoom. After I left, I found myself in Oxford Street. No! – I'm not having coffee in Oxford Street, so I made my way to Greek Street and sat outside a lovely café. I felt as if I was on holiday in Paris! As I sat there my mind was cast back to my early days when I was about 16 and living at the Interval Club in Dean Street.

Dear **Michael Williams** stayed there a year before I arrived, and I had the good fortune to meet **Kitty Fitzgerald**, a member of the old **Catholic Stage Guild**; a very great lady, later to act with **Ian Bannen** in the film *Waking Ned*. As a very innocent boy from Birkenhead I was very quickly introduced to the wicked ways of Soho! On my way back to the club late one evening, a lady of the night greeted me from the corner of the street: 'Like a nice time dear?' I replied, 'I'm an out of work actor.' 'Ok, when you have a job come back and see me. *If you've an Equity card, I'll give you a reduction!!*' It was a Catholic club and a godsend to someone new to London - meals and a room and phone messages taken! It was run by a wonderful character, **Molly Hewitt** and was on the site where the **Soho Theatre** now stands.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Prue Gillett** responded to my request for anything that might interest members, by sending this very moving email:

I performed a piece as a monologue at the CaAPA **Women in the Church** Evening in 2017. Please note that it wasn't written by me but by a very good friend of mine, **KATHERINE MARY BRYDEN**, who died of cancer in November 2015. She wasn't a member of CaAPA but she was a wonderful Catholic (one of the best) and one of the world's leading experts on Samuel Beckett, with a number of published books to her credit. (See *below*\*) Mary also wrote some unpublished but award-winning fictional work, notably a collection of short stories, amongst which I discovered **Anything Boys Can Do**.

Losing Mary was a huge blow for me, and members of CaAPA were a wonderful support to me throughout this bereavement. It is not surprising, therefore, that when we were asked to submit playlets for the *Women in the Church evening*, I immediately thought of **Anything Boys Can Do**. I consequently wrote to **Molly** and **Robin**, asking them if I could submit a work that was not mine but was original/unpublished and fitted the bill in other respects, and they promptly agreed. I saw the offering as something I could do in memory of Mary who was, and remains, very dear to me and as a "Thank you" to the CaAPA members who prayed for her, for her family and for me in the last few weeks of her life.

I have spoken to Mary's widower, Ray, and he is very happy, as I am, for you to include *Anything Boys Can Do* in the collection **Jeremy Rowe** is thinking of getting published. We trust that all copyright issues will be dealt with appropriately.

Before I finish, I must thank you for another interesting Newsletter.

All the best and God bless. Prue

\* *Women in Samuel Beckett's Prose and Drama* (1993) , *Samuel Beckett and the Idea of God* (1998), *Deleuze and Religion* (2001), *Gilles Deleuze: Travels in Literature* (2007), *Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust* (2009) ) (jointly with M Topping), ) and a number of edited books: *Samuel Beckett and Music* (1998), *Beckett and Animals* (2013).

\*\*\*NB: We will attach Prue's piece: *Anything Boys Can Do* in the next newsletter! \*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*



And now a roundup of some news items you may have missed:

## IRAQ: CALL FOR CHRISTIANS TO RETURN HOME



*The Assyrian International News Agency (AINA)* report that the *Iraqi Prime Minister, Mustafa Al-Kazemi*, has called on Christians to return home to Iraq after the defeat of the so-called Islamic State. AINA says Prime Minister Al-Kazemi is serious about providing assistance to Christian families.

He is quoted saying: *"Iraq is a country for everyone, and Christians are the original children of the country. We are glad that Christians will return to Iraq and contribute to its reconstruction. Iraqis of all sects are yearning for a new Iraq that believes in peace and rejects violence."*

On Sunday, Al-Kazemi met with **Cardinal Louis Raphael I Sako**, the *Chaldean Catholic Patriarch*, who hopes the Iraqi government will continue to meet the aspirations of the people and enable it to address many of the challenges facing

the country.

Cardinal Sako said there are a large number of Christians that want to return to Iraq: *"The Church supports Al-Kazemi's steps towards achieving security and stability throughout Iraq," he said. "Christians are proud of their Iraqi identity, and they feel more reassured, in light of the serious handling of the Al-Kazemi government of the Christian file."*

The Christian population in Iraq has declined by 90 per cent to below 250,000. Some reports suggest the actual figure may be lower than 120,000. When Daish/ISIS seized Mosul and the Nineveh Plains in the summer of 2014 forcing out the region's entire Christian population, such was the devastation that many feared the community would never recover. Following the ousting of ISIS in late 2016 the faithful began to return.

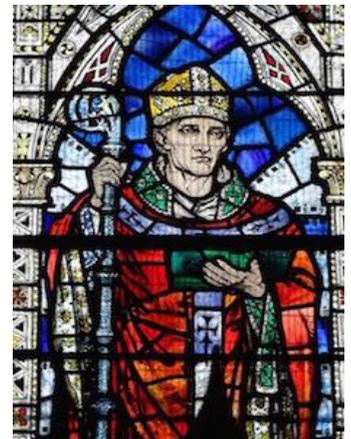
In Qaraqosh, the largest Christian town, half of the Christians have returned, helped by organisations such as Aid to the Church in Need. But they face great difficulties, including a lack of security and intimidation.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Who knew this?!*

## ABINGDON - OLDEST TOWN IN BRITAIN

**St Edmund of Abingdon**



A *Clerk of Oxford* writes: If you were asked to guess the oldest town in Britain, you might not think of **Abingdon**. But the market town, which lies six miles south of Oxford, claims - and with some justice - to be the *"oldest continuously occupied town"* in this country. Situated on a loop of the Thames, in a green river valley, Abingdon was a densely occupied and well-defended settlement by the Iron Age, surrounded by ditches which can still be traced in the plan of the modern town. Throughout the Roman and early Anglo-Saxon periods, the town's population persisted, and by the tenth century had become the site of an important monastery.

Tourists who come to Oxford from around the world rarely make their way to Abingdon; it's a working town, not a showplace. Its central shopping area was a casualty of post-war planners, a mass of modern concrete and chain stores; to the north, new housing estates are creeping ever closer to the famous university city. What might have been Abingdon's chief tourist attraction, its cathedral-like abbey church, was destroyed five centuries ago.



\*\*\*\*\*

*After the exam results debacle this summer, some cheerier news!*

### **RELIGIOUS STUDIES A-LEVEL ENTRIES COMPARE WELL AGAINST OTHER HUMANITIES**

The number of Religious Studies A-level exam entries has declined at a lower rate than other humanities in 2020, performing better than some subjects despite a backdrop of overall declining entries and changes to the examination system.

15,692 RS A-level entries were recorded in England and Wales this year, compared with 17,490 in 2019. Although this represents a decline of 11.5%, it compares favourably with Geography (down 16.2%) and History (down 15.1%). The overall number of A-Level entries in England and Wales fell this year by 2.6% from 768,217 in 2019 to 748,905 in 2020. The reduction reflects both a smaller cohort of 18 year olds (599,393 in 2020 compared with 618,873 in 2019 [Office for National Statistics]) and changes to the assessment of A level and AS examinations that had an effect in 2018, when the majority of schools changed their policies to recommending three A-levels, versus four in previous years. The number of AS exam entries also declined by 24.6% following AS and A-level reforms.

The demographic shift and changes to the examination system mean that it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions from comparisons with previous years, however the key outcomes of the 2020 A-level results in England and Wales for Religious Education are as follows:

- 15,692 RS A-level entries were recorded, a decrease of 11.5% on 2019.
- Despite the decrease in entries for RS, there are still 41% more entries than in 2003 (11,132 entries were recorded in 2003).
- The 11.5% decrease in entries for RS is smaller or the same as equivalent figures for some other subjects such as Geography (down 16.2%), History (down 15.1%), and Political Studies (down 12.5%).
- The increase of 41% in the number of entries for RS A-level since 2003 is greater than equivalent changes over the same period for subjects such as Geography (down 14.9%), Law (down 5.4%), and History (up 7.1%).
- Among arts, humanity, or social science subjects, only Sociology (up 61.9%), Economics (up 80.1%) and Political Studies (up 90.5%) have seen stronger growth since 2003.
- The relative stability of entries suggests that candidates continue to recognise the value of RS A-level for Higher Education entry, graduate employment, and as a valuable life skill.

Professor Trevor Cooling, Chair, Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC), said: "The figures are encouraging. Despite the context of a declining cohort of 18 year olds, the reduction in A-level entries, and the knock on effect of some schools' failure to provide Religious Studies at Key Stage 4, the subject is proving its popularity at this level.

*"While other humanities have seen a significant decline over time, RS has held firm. It is testimony to the value that young people, higher education institutions, and employers, place on Religious Studies.*

*"The Government should recognise the importance of RS in preparing pupils for life in multicultural Britain and a globalized workplace and take forward the recommendations of the Commission on RE for a National Entitlement to Religion and Worldviews."*

**Ben Wood, Chair, National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE)**, said: "Well done to all those students receiving their A-level Religious Studies results today. Though this year has seen grades awarded in an



*unprecedented way, I hope that all students will remember to take away the value of what they have learned over the last few years.*

*"And a special thank you to the teachers who have taught these students with skill and expertise, and then taken on the challenge of submitting grades to exam boards in such a professional manner. They too should remember that the value of their work lies not only in the end grade, but also in the impact made on these young people as they grow up.*

*"Whatever route they take from here, students of Religious Studies will continue to build their understanding and skills as they encounter different people in life, discover the enormous variety and complexity of worldviews that exist today, and apply those skills in a host of social and professional situations.*

*"Students' recognition of the value of Religious Studies, as shown by today's figures, must be reflected in future Government policy. Much more must be done to protect the subject's vital role in the preparing young people for an increasingly complex world, and I urge policymakers to carefully consider the Commission on RE's important recommendations."*

### **Case studies: The student perspective on Religious Studies**

Students who had completed Religious Studies at both GCSE and A-level were asked about how the study of the subject has helped them, and why they might recommend it to other students.

**Tarek Ahmed, from Haslingden High School in Lancashire**, recalls objectivity as one of the skills that studying Religious Studies has helped him to develop. *"I've really enjoyed looking deeply at both sides of a debate. As an opinionated individual, I often establish my views on a topic upon first glance, however, assessing and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of both sides of the argument before drawing my own conclusion at the very end has allowed me to approach ideas with a more neutral perspective."*



**Aneira King,**

**Aneira King, from Bishop Gore School in Swansea**, said: *"Studying atheism was incredibly thought-provoking, as it forced me to challenge my view of my own atheism and re-evaluate it. Perhaps the most useful skill I learned from taking RS A level is how to process, analyse and evaluate abstract ideas, as this wasn't something that my other A-levels covered in detail."*

She added *"I would recommend studying Religious Studies as it helps you to understand the modern world. The world is shaped by religion, whether historically, politically, sociologically or in art and literature. Studying RS helps to better understand the views and actions of people, as well as how influential religion has been on so many aspects of life throughout time and into the present day."* Both students will be starting university in the new academic year. Tarek will begin his studies in History and International Relations at the University of Reading, meanwhile Aneira will read Theology at Newnham College, Cambridge.

\*\*\*\*\*



*A surprising item from where the coronavirus allegedly originated:*

## CHINA: REFLECTION FROM WUHAN

### The Great Wall



*The author is a Catholic living in Wuhan, China.* In mid-November 2015, a variety of circumstances in Wuhan led me to be introduced to a provincial official who works in the area where the civil authorities communicate with the Catholic Church. All the indications were that his role is a senior position in the province, a fact supported by the careful attention that his assistant was giving him on that Monday morning. Following a typically friendly Chinese approach during initial introductions, an intriguing question was posed by the official. He asked me if I knew the Church's view on the terrorist attacks that had taken place in Paris the previous Friday night. He was referring to the traumatic night in Paris when coordinated terrorist attacks at six locations claimed the lives of 130 people and left hundreds of others injured.

Aware of the carnage that had occurred in Paris, I said that I had not actually read any response from the Church to the tragedy. However, I added that I expected the Church would express its deep sadness at the loss of life, its prayers and consolation for those who were injured and grieving, as well as the need for an ongoing commitment to genuine understanding between peoples of different faiths and cultures.

Having communicated what I expected would be included in a Church response to the events in Paris, the official's contribution from across the table took me a little by surprise. In a calm voice he said that **Pope Francis** had spoken at the weekend about the Paris terrorist attacks. This was followed up by him saying that what was said by Pope Francis was very good.

My surprise at what I was hearing was based on a number of facts. Firstly, this was a Chinese official asking about the Church's response to a major event that had taken place a long way from his own area of responsibility. Secondly, it showed that one Chinese official had been paying attention at the weekend to a statement made by Pope Francis. Thirdly, he was evaluating that statement by Pope Francis in a positive way.

In China very few glimpses are provided into how officials personally view the Church, especially at an international level. However, on this occasion it seemed to be different. A view was being expressed that recognised the wisdom of what the Church can offer to the world, especially in times of deep distress.

Within an hour we concluded our discussion, shook hands and went our separate ways. As I departed, I pondered on how China really perceives the Church at this time in history. Perhaps what is expressed publicly by officials in China and what is casually recycled from recent history about the Church in China by international media outlets are in danger of obscuring changes of perception that may be happening slowly for some people within the vast bureaucracy that reaches to every corner of China.

This year's combination of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing international trade tensions and the recent events that have led to the closure of consulates, reveal that China is currently living through one of its more difficult years on the international stage.

At a time when a unified international approach is needed to cope with the most challenging pandemic in a century, the need to avoid further aggravation in international relations seems to be essential. On that morning in 2015 I was surprised to find out that one official in China was paying such close attention to the Church's view on international events. In spite of all the complexities and contradictions that exist in China, it is possible that some people within



the country's administration are paying attention to what is being said by the Church in these times of uncertainty, whether this is the Church's approach to supporting people through the COVID-19 pandemic or statements seeking to bring calm and understanding to strained international relations. A clearly expressed view by the Church about these challenging situations has the possibility of finding its way to the hearts and minds of leaders in China even though the Church view will not stir public comment here.

For many years the Catholic Church in China has been cautiously finding its way forward in a domestic setting that has been every bit as complex as China's current international setting. The enduring ability of many Church leaders in China to negotiate these turbulent domestic waters and also find ways to serve the needs of some of the most neglected people in society never ceases to amaze me. Perhaps their faithful witness to the Gospel is part of what encourages some people in positions of civil authority in China to give serious attention to the Church's view on the shared issues facing all of humanity at this time in history.

An expression in the Chinese language which translates as "*high mountain, flowing water*" celebrates the friendship that emerges when a musician eventually finds a person who can recognise the mountain and the water that are symbolised in the tunes he plays on his ancient lute. The educated musician on the shore and the poor man who stepped off a small boat in the dark of night were unlikely friends. However, their shared appreciation of music provided them with the common ground to forge a new friendship. Perhaps the same approach needs to be at the heart of international dialogue at this time, a setting where the common focus becomes the needs of those who are struggling with the devastation caused by current global upheaval. While the Church's view on global issues will not receive public comment in China, we should not assume that its view is falling on deaf ears. The Church's ongoing ministries to people in need and its ability to express a balanced view on international events can contribute to a way forward, even if that contribution does not receive public recognition.



\*\*\*\*\*

### *An example of positive Christianity:* PIONEERING RESEARCH PROJECT INTO ROLE OF RELIGIOUS IN INNER CITIES

**The Little Sisters of Jesus live on the 13th floor of an east London tower block,**

**opening their home to the community**

*The Centre for Catholic Studies in Durham and the Passionists (St Joseph's Province)* have launched a collaborative study into those Religious, who, motivated by a desire to put into practice an '*option for the poor,*' have moved to the inner cities, the outer estates and tower blocks in the years following *Vatican II*.

One of the driving forces behind the project, **Fr Martin Newell CP**, who himself shares a house in inner city Birmingham with asylum seekers, explains that the project will look not just at the tangible realities and impact of moving to these areas but also at the inner life of prayer and spirituality that has led certain Religious to make these radical choices:

*"Part of their spirituality was often an association with 'hiddenness'.* We think that it is time to tell this important story of Gospel commitment to the poor, forgotten and marginalised people and places in our midst" says Fr Martin.

The Passionists are currently in discussions with the Centre for Catholic Studies in Durham about funding for the research; their vision at present includes events and publications that will reach beyond academia into wider Church and society.



"However," adds Fr Martin, "we also want to share this project with other Religious, who were mostly women, especially those who have been part of the story. If you or your Congregation are at all interested in supporting this project, please do get in touch."

**Bede Professor of Catholic Theology at Durham, Karen Kilby**, welcomed the collaboration with congregations: "We consider this a very important research project because the distinctive way of living out the religious life it will explore is so significant. We hope the research will provide the means to remember, learn from, reflect on and pass on to new generations something of the contribution of this group of Religious, and thus also to properly honour their work and their lives."

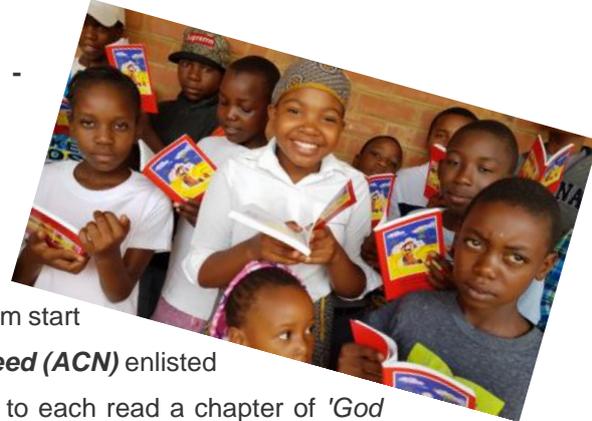
Fr Martin hopes that the research into the urban mission of **Religious in the UK** post Vatican Two will shine a light on a radical living out of the Gospel that has often been so under the radar that it's gone unnoticed: "This is a good news story about the Catholic Church that up till now remains largely untold" he says.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Performers spreading the Word: GOD SPEAKS TO HIS CHILDREN - LOCKDOWN PROJECT COMPLETED

ACN's Child Bible being read by children in Zimbabwe: © Aid to

the Church in Need



A lockdown project, inviting high-profile personalities to record the Bible from start to finish, is now available in full. **Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)** enlisted the support of bishops, a BBC presenter and an actor - among others - to each read a chapter of 'God speaks to His children', an abbreviated Bible for younger readers.

The project, which was completed on the 27th August, was originally conceived as a way to help parents during lockdown.

**Dr Caroline Hull, ACN UK's community outreach manager**, said it will be an invaluable resource for children as they prepare to go back to school. Dr Hull said: "We hope primary schools, families and especially young children will make use of the Child's Bible Project in the classroom and at home."

Every weekday since Easter Monday, 13th April, ACN uploaded to YouTube a video of a chapter being read out, and also provided a weekly workbook containing video links, activities and other resources, which can be accessed on the charity's website.

**Alex Macqueen**, who has starred in *Horrible Histories: The Movie - Rotten Romans*, *The Thick of It*, *The Inbetweeners* and *Peep Show*, read chapter 11, while **Jen Copestake, a BBC presenter**, read chapter nine.

About **25 Catholic bishops from Argyll** and the Isles in Scotland to Plymouth in south-west England also read and reflected on a chapter. Headteachers, lay leaders as well as ACN staff and volunteers also joined in.

Dr Hull added: "I hope that everyone involved feels proud of what we have achieved both for our children here at home and also, through our prayers and support, for the millions of Christian children who receive copies of the ACN Child's Bible elsewhere in the world."

The project came in response to a Bible initiative '**The God who speaks**' by the **Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales** and celebrates ACN's Child's Bible which has been translated into 190 languages with more than 51 million copies printed.



**Lorraine McMahon, head of ACN operations in Scotland**, said: "The Child's Bible Project, like all of ACN's School Resources, is a fantastic opportunity for ACN to engage with the youth about the work we do, through our Christian Faith. "Thank you to all of those who took time out to support our project."

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\* Please join ACN and young people all over the world at 9am on **Monday, 19th October 2020** for '**One Million Children Praying the Rosary**'. Information on how to join in will appear on the resources page of the ACN (UK) website: [www.acnuk.org](http://www.acnuk.org) \*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\* This year's **#RedWednesday** is on **25th November 2020** and there will be virtual assemblies, a **#RedWednesday Novena**, and other resources for schools, which will be available shortly. Click [here](#) \*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\* ACN HOLY HOURS

Join us to pray before the Blessed Sacrament **each first Wednesday at 3pm**. The Holy Hours will focus on prayer for the suffering and persecuted Church, for clergy, religious and for all those who support the work of ACN in our world today. The next one should take place on **Wednesday 7th October**. For the Livestream link and to read more about it, click [here](#). \*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

*And it's not only CaAPA members who are scribbling!*

**GREENER PASTURES AND BROWN BLAZERS**

**Edna Hunneysett**



While many of us were reading books during the Covid-19 lockdown, one Yorkshire woman sat down and wrote one.

**Edna Hunneysett**, already a published author and great grandmother, challenged herself last Christmas to finish her book in time for her 80th birthday at the end of July. She found that being self-isolated for four months, helped her reach her target.

Edna lives in Middlesbrough with her husband, a retired teacher, and is looking forward to their diamond wedding anniversary next April. Marrying at 20 and having eight children, it wasn't until she turned 50 that Edna began studying for a degree. It took five years distance learning to gain a BA and she followed this by doing an MA before writing three books about mental health and the need for support.

**'Greener Pastures and Brown Blazers'** is a heart-warming story of growing up in the early 1950s. It continues the semi-biographical account of the life of Emma Holmes immediately on from Edna's first novel '**Greener Beyond the Hill**' which spans the first eleven years of Emma's life.

In the 1950s, when passing the eleven plus exam meant access to a grammar school, eleven-year-old Emma Holmes is thrust into the strict discipline and rigorous structured life at a convent grammar boarding school, separating her from her five siblings. She also leaves the idyllic setting of an isolated farm on the North Yorkshire moors where she has spent her childhood in a happy and carefree environment, notwithstanding the poverty and hardship and stark living conditions of life without electricity, with only access to water, a tap in the back kitchen fed from a spring in the field and with a two mile walk to the nearest village school.

Will Emma's ability to achieve academically help her overcome her lack of confidence and the scrutiny from her day girl class mates who find her broad Yorkshire accent amusing, who are amazed that she isn't a regular attendee at



a local cinema, that she has never been to a swimming baths and who are curious as to what she does in the evenings.

After arriving at the boarding school, how does Emma adapt to not seeing her family for seven weeks? Will life be the same when she returns home? Will two-year-old Jacob remember her?

Over the first years, Emma strives to fit in at school only to find she no longer feels that she is comfortable when returning to her home life at holiday time. She comes to realise that she doesn't seem to fit in either place. What will her friend with whom she is bonding, make of her home situation, if she invites her for a holiday? Faith has her own issues with her mam being a single parent and no knowledge of her father. Will Emma's family be a substitute one for her?

What of her 12-year-old sister Martha with whom she is closely bonded and who didn't pass the second half of the eleven plus exam and who remains at the village school. Will their relationship be affected?

Later, Emma's father introduces Emma to smoking woodbines, alongside her sister. Martha introduces Emma to local dances and lifts on motorbikes, a stark contrast to bedtime at eight-thirty at school. How does Emma explain the nicotine stain on her finger to her questioning peer group?

Does passing the eleven plus exam improve Emma's quality of life and enable her to come through academically and become a confident sixteen-year-old? Will she sink or will she swim?

**\*\*\*This book is a most enjoyable read and heartily recommended. Copies are available from the publishers: Chipmunkpublishing.\*\*\***

\*\*\*\*\*



*And now, two extraordinary people - who each cared passionately for the poor and dispossessed: SHREWSBURY: BISHOP PRAYS ELIZABETH PROUT MAY BE RECOGNISED AS A SAINT (+ click [here](#) for a BBC video clip).*

**Elizabeth Prout**

*The Bishop of Shrewsbury* has invited Catholics to pray that a 19th century religious Sister hailed as *"the Mother Teresa of Manchester"* may be recognised as a Saint.

The *Rt Rev Mark Davies* said that Shrewsbury-born *Mother Elizabeth Prout* was one of the most remarkable of all of the famous people from the town because of her work and witness among some of the poorest people of Victorian England.

The Bishop described Mother Elizabeth as an *"educational pioneer"* who founded schools for the industrialised poor and refuges for factory girls as she *"dedicated her life to the service of the most abandoned"*.

He said she was inspired by her Catholic faith to confront *"the most degrading situations with the confidence of the revolution which flows from Christ's command: 'Love one another as I have loved you'."*

The Bishop expressed the hope that Mother Elizabeth would be recognised for her witness to the inviolable dignity of all human life, which he described as the *"labour of her life"*.

Bishop Davies noted that Mother Elizabeth significantly came to Manchester during the same period that *Karl Marx* and *Friedrich Engels* also visited the city as they prepared to write *The Communist Manifesto*.



# Catholic Association of Performing Arts

While the two revolutionary philosophers sat together *"to formulate the violent theory of Communism; an ideology that would bring still greater suffering to humanity"*, said Bishop Davies, *"Elizabeth risked violence herself to enter Manchester's darkest and most dangerous streets in order to reach those in greatest need"*.

*"If Marx and Engels merely observed the condition of the poor, Elizabeth desired to live and die among them," the Bishop continued. "She became a sister to the abandoned so they might recognise their own innate dignity as children of God."*

The words of the Bishop came in a homily preached at Shrewsbury Cathedral on September 2, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Mother Elizabeth at Coleham, Shrewsbury, where her father, Edward, worked as a cooper for a local brewery. The Mass was attended by members of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion, the religious institute co-founded by Mother Elizabeth.

Bishop Davies said: *"Two centuries later, what can the life of Elizabeth Prout teach us in this 21st Century? From the banks of the Severn where her story began, I wish to point very simply to where, I believe, her witness will shine out ever more clearly in years to come. Wherever human life is devalued and discarded - in what Pope Francis describes today as a 'throw-away culture' - Elizabeth teaches how human dignity and true social progress are bound-up with love, Divine Love.*

*"She saw clearly that it was only by discovering that we are loved by God that the innate and eternal worth of every human life is recognised and held secure. This was to be the labour of her life and her universal and enduring witness. In the face of the overwhelming denial of human dignity in the first industrial slums, Elizabeth took remarkable steps in both education and social care which continue to show us how human suffering always demands the service of love, not merely public services.*

*"In societies where there is an urgent call for new evangelisation, she exemplifies that it is only by the discovery of interior life - of intimate, friendship with Christ - that we will be able to go beyond the limits imposed by our fears and so respond to our Christian calling. For these reasons, and for many others that will be more eloquently set out in years to come, we today ask her prayers; and dare to pray that this woman of Shrewsbury - the Servant of God Elizabeth Prout - may soon be recognised among the Blessed of every time and place."*

\*\*\*\*\*

## A LEGACY OF COMPASSION: BLESSED FRÉDÉRIC OZANAM

**Blessed Frédéric Ozanam**

*"In my life I want to become better and do a little good."*

The modest words of a great man, **Blessed Frédéric Ozanam**, whose **Feast Day is September 9th**. While remembered primarily as the founder of the **St Vincent de Paul Society**, the example of his life is well worth studying.

Born in 1813 in Milan to a family of middle-class French Catholics, he spent most of his childhood in Lyon. At the age of six Ozanam almost died of typhoid fever, however he recovered and thrived at school.

At sixteen the young Ozanam's study of philosophy provoked a crisis of faith. He vowed to God that if he could see the truth, he would devote his entire life to its defence. Under the tutelage of his religion and philosophy teacher, **Abbé Noirot**, he emerged with a solid intellectual basis for his faith, a life commitment to the defence of Truth and a deep sense of compassion for unbelievers.





## Catholic Association of Performing Arts

In 1831 Ozanam travelled to Paris to study law. In the wake of the French Revolution, society was in turmoil; anti-clericalism was rife, and poverty stark, with one in twelve people in Paris classified as *'indigent'*. Finding the climate of the university hostile to Christian belief, he sought support in the company of like-minded students. With the sponsorship of an older ex-professor, **J Emmanuel Bailly**, these young men revived a discussion group called the **'Society of Good Studies'** and transformed it into a **"Conference of History"**. This group rapidly became a forum for lively discussions between Christians and unbelievers.

At one such meeting, when Ozanam and his friends were attempting to prove from historical evidence alone the truth of the Catholic Church, their adversaries declared that the Church was no longer a source of good. One dissenting voice challenged, "What is your church doing now for the poor of Paris? Show us your works and we will believe you!"

Shaken by this challenge, Ozanam and his friends met to consider their response. On an evening in May 1833 seven of the group (*M. Bailly, Frédéric Ozanam, Francois Lallier, Paul Lamanche, Felix Clave, Auguste Letaillandier and Jules De Vaux*) agreed to engage in practical works of charity. They changed the name to **"Conference of Charity"**, and instead of engaging merely in theoretical discussions, they determined to meet the needs of the poor. With the help of **Sister Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity** (a religious order founded by St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac), the fledgling advocates for social justice headed onto the streets of Paris to bring material assistance to those living in poverty.

The new group quickly expanded and spread throughout France, eventually changing its name to the **'Conference of St Vincent de Paul'**. A few years later, **George Wigley**, who was born near Manchester but raised in Boulogne, became acquainted with Ozanam while studying in Paris. Inspired by his example, Wigley expressed an interest in starting a group in England. Frédéric advised him to begin by writing articles for magazines. Helped by **Fr Ignatius Spencer CP** (*Winston Churchill's great uncle*), he published articles about the Society in **The Tablet**. On February 12, 1844, an inaugural meeting was held at the Sablonière Hotel in London and the first Conference was set up. By the end of 1844 four Conferences had been formed in London and the movement quickly spread. Today there are nearly 1,000 Conferences in England and Wales with almost 10,000 members.

Meanwhile, Ozanam went on to become Professor of Foreign Literature at the Sorbonne, with doctorates in law and literature. In 1846 he was named to the Legion of Honour, the highest order of merit in France. At the same time, he continued to work with the Conference of St Vincent de Paul and was in great demand as a public speaker. He had never enjoyed a robust constitution, and between the teaching, writing and charity work, his health eventually declined, and he was forced to retire. By the time he died in Marseille in 1853, membership of the Conferences of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) had reached 15,000. Today, the SVP is present in 150 countries, has 800,000 members in 47,000 Conferences, and 1.5 million volunteers and collaborators. Every day, the SVP helps over 30 million people around the world. That's quite a legacy!

Frédéric Ozanam, a student with a social conscience, has since been revered as an exemplar of the lay apostle in family, social and intellectual life. He was a man ahead of his time; in one of his lessons he foresaw and proposed workers' associations. His writings have been recognised as a precursor of Catholic Social Teaching, and his books are still in great demand.

In 1997, he was beatified by **Pope John Paul II**, who himself had been a member of the Society as a student before the Second World War.

Let us end with some more words from Frédéric Ozanam himself:



**"The question which is agitating the world today is a social one. It is a struggle between those who have nothing and those who have too much. It is a violent clash of opulence and poverty which is shaking the ground under our feet. Our duty as Christians is to throw ourselves between these two camps in order to accomplish by love, what justice alone cannot do."**

\*\*\*\*\*



*A more current concern:* **LETTER: COVID CONCERNS + COMMENTS**

**Fr Tom Grufferty from Portsmouth Diocese** writes:

I have three major concerns about the current Church procedures on Catholic Church attendance at Mass.

- I have celebrated Mass where there was more than six people in one loop.

- I have also seen on TV, Streamed Masses were people would not receive Holy Communion except on the tongue. This is suicidal Catholicism for the giver of the Sacred Species and the recipient, not to mention the people following who want to receive the Lord. In this case the Giver of Life in abundance has become the giver of death for a potential number of people.

If those who insist on receiving Holy Communion on the tongue believe the Mass is a sacrifice, they need to make a sacrifice for their own sake and the sake of others. If people want to be a martyr for a cause they have the freedom to do so but it is a completely different scenario if they drag others into the martyrdom.

There is also confusion about Holy Communion on the tongue allowed in one Diocese but not in the Diocese next door.

- Finally, I have heard where a community of priests have removed the sanitiser from the sanitiser bottle and replaced it with Holy Water. While I recognise the faith of such a gesture this procedure is completely dishonest. If people die because of using Holy Water when they were led to believe they were using sanitiser there could be enormous litigation consequences for the Church.

The Church has entered a new phase whereby staying at home is the new way of worshipping and the sooner we realise that the easier it will be for everyone. You can be as good a Catholic in your own sitting room as in the front row of your local church and much safer from the current pandemic.

**Comments**

**Fr Allen Morris, from St Nicholas RC church in Boldmere Sutton Coldfield** writes:

If he has evidence or even strong suspicion of ministers breaking current regulations and guidance, has he not reported it to the relevant Church authorities? If he has and they have failed to respond, why has he not reported that to the relevant secular authorities?

As for people being safer at home than they are in church, that does rather depend on how they are living at home. Current evidence suggests that much of the present increase in contagion levels is a consequence of what is happening in people's homes, rather than in our churches.



**Linda Harding from Selly Oak, Birmingham, writes:**

I've also heard people complain about not being able to receive Communion on the tongue, having to wear masks and all the distancing necessary in church these days. I would just like to say how much I appreciate the way churches have reached out to us in so many ways. Let's not forget that. I'm a diabetic with other health conditions and had to stay home for months. My parish priest and others from my parish rang to see how I was just about every week during the lockdown. Some friends from church gave me a tablet and taught me how to use it. That was so kind of them. Everybody rallied around helping with shopping. After the first week I was watching Masses every day from the *Vatican* and *Walsingham* and other places and still do. Now I have been back to Mass a couple of times. It is so nice to see everybody. But I really enjoy watching Mass and prayers online as well. I can't imagine what lockdown would have been like without computers and telephones! So, let's not complain about the restrictions. Let's trust the doctors and our church leaders know what they are doing and show them some gratitude.

\*\*\*\*\*

**On a lighter note: RIDE+STRIDE HELPING TO SAVE HISTORIC CHURCHES AND CHAPELS**

**Source: National Churches Trust**



**Ride+Stride** may be a little different this year due to Covid-19 restrictions, but churches and chapels in 24 English counties will be welcoming cyclists and walkers on **Saturday, 12 September** as they take part in this annual fundraising day to save historic churches.

Why not join them, there is still time to dust off your hiking boots or check your brakes and plan your route around your favourite churches and chapels.

This year, some County Churches Trusts are holding the event in a similar way to previous years and for others the event may take a different form. **So, please check out how Ride+Stride is taking place near you on the dedicated website i.e. [click here](#)**

In 2019, Ride+Stride raised over £1.2 million for the restoration and preservation of the UK's historic churches, chapels and meeting houses. The annual charity fundraiser will see many places of worship welcome **'Riders+Striders'**, who are sponsored to visit as many churches as they can in a day. In normal circumstances the doors would be open and volunteers ready to greet and encourage all participants. This year, although many doors may be closed, the welcome will still be there as well as the appreciation of the efforts from all who are taking part to raise funds.

All money raised will help to repair churches, chapels and meeting houses throughout England. The main threats facing historic churches include failing roofs, gutters, downpipes and high-level stonework, with damage often caused by high winds and rain. 913 of the churches most in need of rescue are currently on Historic England's *'Heritage at Risk'* Register.

**National 'Ride + Stride for Churches' chairman Hilary Cakebread Hall** said: *"We have seen over the last few months, the good that churches and chapels are doing in their communities. Daily we hear of wonderful stories how churches are increasingly becoming a support for the wider community. 'Ride + Stride for Churches' helps provide vital funding to enable the repairs to the building and installation of kitchens and heating that makes them able to serve the needs of the public."*



# Catholic Association of Performing Arts

'Ride+Stride for churches' started in Suffolk in 1982, the idea of **Judith Foord**. Since then, over £35 million has been raised nationally to fund urgent church repairs.

The event is organised by **County Churches Trusts** across England. Places of worship taking part include those belonging to the *Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church, the Quakers and the United Reformed Church.*

This year you can Ride+Stride in the following English counties: *Bedfordshire; Berkshire; Buckinghamshire; Cambridgeshire; Devon; Dorset; Gloucestershire; Hampshire and the Islands; Kent; Leicestershire; Lincolnshire; Norfolk; Northamptonshire; Nottinghamshire; Oxfordshire; Shropshire; Somerset; Staffordshire; Suffolk; Surrey; Warwickshire and Coventry; Wiltshire; Worcestershire and Dudley; Yorkshire.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*... and some words of consolation during these troubling times: that you are accepted and loved unconditionally by*

**TALKING POINTS, LIFE, Fr Billy Swan      -an extract from *Finding God: Faith and Mental Health*.**

The first and most basic message of the Christian faith is the pronouncement that we are accepted and loved unconditionally by God. In the Bible, St John reminds us of two of the most foundational doctrines of the whole Christian Gospel. First, that “*God is Love*” (1 Jn 4:8) – not that God is like love or does love but rather He **is** love itself. **God’s essence and nature is love at the core.** The second follows on from this, that “*God loved us first*” (1 Jn 4:19). **God’s love precedes anything we can ever say or do by way of response.** Christians believe that God loving us does not depend on us earning that love by how we behave. This is the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and the gift that is continually offered to all in every place and time.

## **THE GIFT OF GOD’S LOVE**

**This message has become so familiar to us that its power to change us no longer has the effect it should.**

It has become so domesticated that we fail to grasp its full potential. Yet it remains a revolutionary message that changes lives every day. To the youth of the Church, Pope Francis spoke these words:

**“The very first truth I would tell each of you is this: ‘God loves you’. It makes no difference whether you have already heard it or not. I want to remind you of it. God loves you. Never doubt this, whatever may happen to you in life. At every moment, you are infinitely loved”.**

This declaration that we are loved by another is a positive, hopeful and transformative truth that addresses our human existence at every level. To be loved and love in return is essential for our emotional lives, for our emotions draw us into loving relationships which give us life and joy. Believing we are loved implies that no matter how we are feeling, how well or sick we become, God’s love is ever available and accessible in a deeply personal and consistent way. **Here is an inexhaustible source of self-esteem and positive energy that cannot be replicated by our own efforts.** It is sheer **gift**.

The assurance of God’s **unconditional love** is given because of who he has declared us to be – beloved children of God our Father who possess the goodness and beauty of God himself. As we are His children, His Spirit of love has been poured into our hearts making us cry out “*Abba Father!*” (Rm 5:5; Ga 4:6) Yes, we are broken, limited and in need of healing and mercy, yet our faith tells us that, no matter how chaotic our lives seem or what our past has been, **the love of Christ never stops pursuing us, offering itself to us again and again.** God’s love for us is not



static but searching and dynamic; it is the love of the good shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep (cf. Lk 15:4ff) or the woman in search of the lost coin (Lk 15:8-10). In the beautiful words of St Augustine (354-430), **“You have called to me, and have cried out and have shattered my deafness...You have sent forth fragrance, I have drawn in my breath and I pant after you. I have tasted you and I hunger and thirst after you. You have touched me and I have burned for your peace”**.

Therefore, as we endure any difficulty, mental or physical, our faith assures us that *“nothing can separate us from the love of God, made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rm 8:39).

### **Accepting God’s love for us**

The second half of this foundational theme of God’s unconditional love is whether and how it is accepted by us as gift. The experience of love consists in its being offered and received. I might be told of God’s love towards me but do I really believe it and accept it? We all know that faith in God’s goodness is severely tested at times of trial and crisis. In periods of great suffering we might be tempted to ask, *“If God loves me then where is He now?”* Or we might resort to the language of merit – on one hand to ask ourselves, *“What have I done to deserve this?”* or on the other hand to say, *“I deserve this because I’m a bad person”*. What makes a gracious acceptance of God’s love easier is to realise that God’s love for us does not depend on how good we are. **He loves us not because we are good but so that we might be good as He is good.**

His love is also constant whether we are happy or sad. He does not love us less in the darkness. **When we suffer we are not being punished for our past or victimised for what we haven’t done.** We know this from the life of Jesus himself and his own suffering though he was innocent of sin. As disciples who participate in his Passion, Jesus leads us on his path and invites us to follow him. On this path and united to his Spirit, we partake in his suffering and the new life he won for us. What we suffer is a participation in the great mystery of his cross that leads to a share in his resurrection. It is a mystery that is greater than any of us for it is part of the transformation not just of us but of the whole world. That is why St Paul understood his trials beyond himself as a completion of *“what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church”* (Col 1:24). Therefore, for the one suffering from physical or mental illness, **the experience of darkness is an invitation to know the Lord Jesus by “sharing in his sufferings”** (Ph 3:11) and with him to offer our pain for the love for all humanity. Here is the mystery of love that is inseparably woven with suffering but that leads to hope and the promise of new life.

### **FAITH IN GOD’S PROVIDENCE**

Finally, a word on the power of faith as trust in divine providence and the freedom from anxiety that comes with that. We human beings are free and responsible. Yet we know from experience that while we can plan and decide as wisely as we can, there are still many variables that are outside our control. We fail, get sick and unexpected things happen. For the person of no faith, the urge to control everything brings with it a great deal of stress and anxiety. If there is no God or no divine providence then all the pressure falls back on us. This added pressure impacts negatively on our mental health.

Faith in God’s providence and goodness does not absolve us of our responsibilities but assures us that the future is bigger than any of us. **Through all the events of life, the person of faith in God receives Jesus’ words with great hope for they know that they do not face their challenges alone:** *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still and trust in me”* (Jn 14:1); *“Come to me all you who labour and are over-burdened and I will give you rest.*



# Catholic Association of Performing Arts

*Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest in your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light” (Mt 11:28-30).* The person of faith can also make these words of St Paul their own: *“We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him” (Rm 8:28).* Here is a confidence consistent with the words of Jesus himself who explicitly urges us not to burden our minds with things beyond our control but to trust in Him and focus instead on being at rights with God and the coming of his kingdom: ***“That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor your body and how you are to cloth it...Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life?...Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Mt 6:25-34).***

This is why the second and third steps of the *“Twelve Step Programme”* of *Alcoholics Anonymous* are invitations to co-operate with and entrust oneself to our *“Higher Power”*. Here is one of the best examples of coming to realise that **we can’t do it all on our own.**

In conclusion, we began with the foundational message of the Gospel as revealed by Jesus – the offer of God’s unconditional love that has the power to change lives. May the continual offer of God’s unconditional love be accepted by us with gratitude and joy. And may we surrender ourselves with confidence and peace to his goodness which triumphs in the end.

\*\*\*\*\*

*And we end with ...One of Michael Slater’s embarrassing moments:*

I was invited to the Celebration of our **National Chaplain Fr Columba Ryan OP’s** Diamond Jubilee at *St Dominic’s*, Haverstock Hill. There was a lovely reception in the garden afterwards. I introduced myself to an interesting character as a member of the Catholic Stage Guild, ‘I am sorry, I don’t seem to know you,’ I said.

*‘I am Malcolm Williamson, Master of the Queen’s Musick’* came the reply.

We talked about the Theatre and, of course, the Catholic Stage Guild. I mentioned that in October we were holding a Mass at *Notre De France* for those suffering from Aids; he mentioned that he had a *‘Tribe Brother’* in Australia who was also suffering. *‘I will be there,’* he said. And he was. It was a Tazie based mass, not his kind of music, but he thought it very moving. Malcolm mentioned that he was composing a Requiem for a ‘tribe brother’, and that we would have the first liturgical celebration. So, all turned out fine in the end!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Again I wish to thank Nadia Ostacchini for final formatting.**

***A reminder that archive copies of the Newsletter are available on the CaAPA website Members’ area.***

***You can access this only if you have a login and password. Do set up an account next time you visit if you haven’t already registered.***

\*\*\*\*\*

***Please do forward anything you feel will be of interest to the Members for publication next time.***

**And we also hope that you’ve been inspired to write on the theme of *Action for the Church in Need*, for our intended event in November at the CAA (subject to confirmation).**

\*\*\*\*\*



# Catholic Association of Performing Arts

*Once again, please send any messages to [kennethmichaels@hotmail.com](mailto:kennethmichaels@hotmail.com) for inclusion in future newsletters.*

In the meantime, please stay safe and may God bless and protect you, your families and friends.

## **Kenneth Michaels**

**(Hon.Secretary).**

**Email:** [michaels.kenneth@gmail.com](mailto:michaels.kenneth@gmail.com)  
Other emails: [treasurer@caapa.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@caapa.org.uk)  
[chaplain@caapa.org.uk](mailto:chaplain@caapa.org.uk)  
[coordinator@caapa.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@caapa.org.uk)

[@Wearecaapa](#)

[www.catholicassociationofperformingarts.org.uk/](http://www.catholicassociationofperformingarts.org.uk/)



*Our diverse group of members, whom are comprised of actors, directors, writers, singers, musicians and other entertainers, share in a creative community where they can also grow in their spiritual values. We also aim to serve the wider community by presenting productions for charitable causes or by taking productions on tour to schools, local theatres, parishes and elderly homes.*