

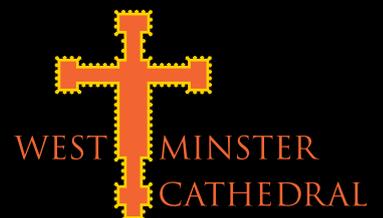
December 2020 | Edition Number 264 | FREE

# Oremus

## Westminster Cathedral Magazine



St John the Baptist both warns  
and helps us look forward to the  
Saviour in Advent





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Oremus, the magazine of Westminster Cathedral, reflects the life of the Cathedral and the lives of those who make it a place of faith in central London. If you think that you would like to contribute an article or an item of news, please contact the Editor.

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Registered Charity Number 233699  
ISSN 1366-7203

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## Inside Oremus

The Editor apologises that the renewed lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused Oremus again to become an online only half-length edition for the month of December. Postal Subscribers will receive a month's credit for this. The good news is that work is already advanced on the January edition, which will revert to a full-length print edition and be available in the Cathedral in time for Christmas. Thank you for your patience and understanding.



*This marble bust of St John the Baptist, by Mino da Fiesole (1428-1490), is in the Museum of Fine Art of Lyons. The inscription on the base reads OPUS MINI, 'The work of Mino'*

© Rama

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# A Helping Hand for Cultural Recovery

Catholic Communications Network

*Parishioners coming into the Cathedral to pray before the Blessed Sacrament during the day may have had their devotions disturbed by the sound of the brickwork repairs being undertaken on the south side of the Cathedral. We apologise for this, but the work has to go ahead and grant money comes with conditions attached about dates by which it must have been spent. This piece records the government assistance which is helping the Cathedral and other architecturally significant Catholic churches.*



Another beneficiary of the grants, the Great Courtyard at Aylesford Priory

**Following the award of a grant of £3m from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund, the Patrimony Committee of the Catholic Bishops Conference is delighted to announce that funding has been offered to 29 Grade I and Grade II\* listed churches and cathedrals throughout England. Churches in England were eligible to apply, and the applications submitted, together with those for Church of England churches and cathedrals, were presented to an Expert Panel comprising a range of national heritage specialists, and also reviewed by Historic England.**

This grants programme is part of the government's Heritage Stimulus Fund, administered by Historic England and is aimed at supporting major repair projects which either stalled earlier this year because of Covid-19, or where loss of income due to many months of closure put urgently needed projects on hold. Architecturally outstanding Catholic churches and cathedrals are being supported across England, many in areas of severe deprivation where funding for repairs is beyond the means of the local congregation. As well as seeing roofs, gutters and stonework repaired and churches made watertight, the grants will support many jobs in the historic buildings and conservation sector and protect much-needed craft skills. The focus of the grants is on urgently needed repairs and works to

enable buildings to remain open and in use for worship and as places of prayer.

Westminster Cathedral is to receive nearly £300k for brickwork conservation and to address urgently needed repairs. St Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham will be able to install a much-needed new fire alarm system with a grant of £92,900 and Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral will be able to restore the stained glass of its beautiful Blessed Sacrament Chapel designed by Ceri Richards. Other Cathedrals being supported include Nottingham, where a 40-year-old boiler urgently needs replacing and Norwich Cathedral, which has a number of targeted repair projects including the long overdue renewal of its main power supply cabling. In Preston, the Cathedral of St Alphonsa – formerly the Jesuit church of St Ignatius where the priest and poet Gerard Manley Hopkins once served – is to receive just over £135k for urgent roof repairs and to address a serious outbreak of dry rot. St Alphonsa is the Cathedral of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Eparchy for Great Britain.

Churches where repairs are being supported include the beautiful Georgian church of St Patrick's, Toxteth, built in 1821; EW Pugin's masterpiece, All Saints, Barton-upon-Irwell at Trafford Park, Manchester; the magnificent St Michael's, Elswick in Newcastle-upon-

Tyne; St Joseph's, Pontefract; St Mary's, Great Yarmouth where water is getting in through a failed valley gutter and damaging an important mural of Our Lady of Yarmouth; the much visited Shrine of Our Lady and St Simon Stock at Aylesford in Kent and churches in Bournemouth, Lyme Regis, Torquay and Launceston. Every one of these has an important and unique story to tell about their history and the contribution these glorious buildings continue to make to their congregations and to the wider community.

In welcoming these grants, The Most Rev George Stack, Archbishop of Cardiff and Chair of the Patrimony Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, said: 'It is marvellous that so many of our outstanding historic churches will be helped with the cost of much-needed repairs through the award of this grant. We are deeply grateful to the Government and Historic England for awarding the funds to make this happen. It is enormously reassuring to those charged with the privilege and responsibility of caring for these outstanding buildings which are so much part of our heritage, that the urgent work of repairing leaking roofs and failing gutters may begin. The much-needed protection measures to the fabric of these "glimpses of heaven" is a challenge and reassurance in these complex times'.

# Join the Companions



... and help us to keep publishing Oremus free of charge

Although we earn income from the advertising which we carry, *Oremus* relies on donations from readers to cover its production costs.

The Companions of *Oremus* was established to recognise those who give generously to support us. Open exclusively to individuals, Companions' names are published in the magazine each month (see page 7). All members are invited to one or more social events during the year and Mass is offered for their intentions from time to time.

If you would like to support us by joining the Companions, please write to *Oremus*, Cathedral Clergy House, 42 Francis Street, London SW1P 1QW or email [oremuscomps@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:oremuscomps@rcdow.org.uk) with your contact details, including postcode. Members are asked to give a minimum of £100 annually. Please mention how you would like your name to appear in our membership list and if you are eligible to Gift Aid your donation. Postal subscriptions to *Oremus* may be purchased through the Cathedral Gift Shop's website or by using the coupon printed in the magazine.

*Thank you for your support.*

# Written for monks, now for your every day

Donato Tallo



**As a Benedictine Oblate, spiritual reading is extremely important to me and so I recently purchased a copy of Richard Frost's recent book on St Benedict's Rule.**

**As an addition to my daily prayer, the book is extremely helpful and a real tool to aid silence, reflection and stillness in a challenging, busy and often stressful world.**

The Rule has much to teach us all today and while it is not particularly long, reflection on the text is essential in order to gain real insight and appreciation of its spiritual content. That there are many wide and varied

commentaries on the Rule exemplify just how much it has to teach us, for throughout the centuries many Christian people, both monastic and non-monastic, people of varying faiths and indeed people of no faith have all gained inspiration from St Benedict.

Richard Frost has prepared this book for anyone whether monastic, oblate or neither who wants to immerse themselves in spiritual reflection on the Rule and link it to everyday living. Benedictine communities generally have a structured manner for reading – often by hearing - the Rule and this is quite often undertaken at mealtimes. When read over a four-month period, this means that in its entirety it is read communally three times each year.

In this book, for each day of the year there is a section of the Rule and a short reflection afterwards. It is a simple yet powerful way for the Rule to be read and then for the text to be pondered on. The beauty of these short reflections is that they are linked to everyday life and situations and can really help the reader to consider how the meaning and context of the Rule can be applied in our own day. The pointers given for prayer are helpful and are a real treasure in aiding our turning to the Lord. For those who would seek some new inspiration on the journey of life in a simple yet powerful manner, this book will do just that. Whether the reader is new to St Benedict or not, this book can help us become closer to Christ through the Rule in a practical and accessible manner.

*Life with St Benedict: the Rule reimagined for everyday living*, Richard Frost; Bible Reading Fellowship, Abingdon 2019; pb, pp 208; ISBN 9780857468130; £9.99

# Fr Witoń writes



© Mazur/CBCFW.org.uk

**Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical year. The First Sunday being during lockdown, we could only watch on screen as the first candle was lit on our Advent wreath. However, we know that change will come, and a slow transition to the new normal. We are so happy that we can at least gather again to celebrate Mass in person.**

The season focuses our attention on three comings of Christ: in the past – at His birth at Bethlehem, in the present - in the community gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist and in the sacrament itself, and in the future – at His Second Coming. We need no special reminder of the Lord's first coming at Bethlehem, given the advance notice of Christmas in commercial advertising, which unfortunately begins earlier each year. We do believe in the Second Coming as well as Christmas, but sadly, for many of us, the Second Coming may be only a notion, having little or no meaningful connection with our everyday experience. It is Christ's coming in the present that is the most spiritually engaging of the three.

Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy teaches that: *'Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross", but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).'*

Advent reminds us that we are *'coming toward'* a richer and fuller future, when Christ will come to make all things new. Seen from a different angle, there is also a *'coming toward'* on God's part, which is why our Advent attitude is to be one of hopeful expectation. The blessings of the Kingdom will *'come toward'* us only to the extent that we *'come toward'* those most in need of our love and support. For this reason the primary spiritual challenge of Advent is to redirect our sense of expectation, particularly of Christ's Second Coming, from *'out there'* to *'right here'*, in our ordinary daily experience, to put our faith into action by serving the poor in our midst.

So let us get ready to meet Him this Advent. Meet Christ through ordinary daily experiences, meet Him in our neighbour, and above all meet Him through a sincere, humble and personal confession, for which there will be ample opportunity in the Cathedral during the days before Christmas.

With every blessing

Fr Sławomir Witoń

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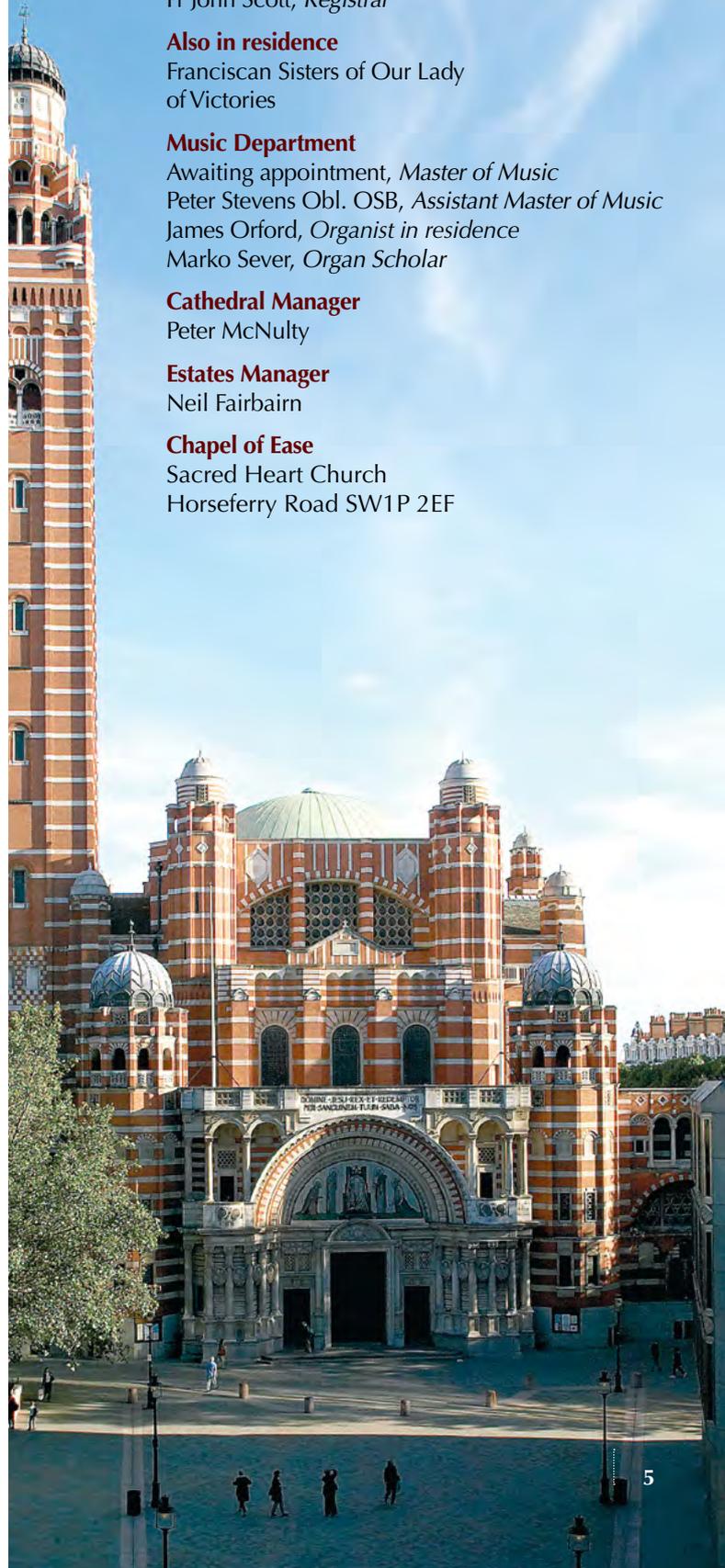
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# Artemisia Returns

Amanda Dickie

**Born in 1593, Artemisia Gentileschi was a celebrated artist of the Italian Baroque. The only daughter of noted painter Orazio Gentileschi, she was trained at home alongside her three brothers. Caravaggio was a family friend and she emulates his passionate storytelling and dramatic use of light and shadow whilst imposing her own style in a definitive feminine perspective. Her paintings were sought after throughout Europe including by the Florentine Medici Court, Philip IV of Spain and England's King Charles I.**

A superb exhibition at the National Gallery displays 30 paintings alongside two by her father, two portraits of her by other artists and a chalk drawing *The Right Hand of Artemisia Holding a Brush*. Her portrayals of biblical and classical scenes depict women as strong, vibrant heroines in cinematic narrative. Aged 17 she painted *Susannah and the Elders* in 1610. It was also her last known subject 42 years later, with her having completed four versions during her career. A few months after her first striking depiction of the vulnerability of Susannah being ogled by two leering men – one older and one younger – she herself was brutally raped by Agostino Tassi, who worked in her father's workshop, abetted by an older colleague who unsuccessfully also attempted rape but was beaten off by Artemisia. A subsequent trial lasted seven months, during which she endured the 'sibylle' torture, where cords were tightened around her fingers to ascertain the veracity of her judicial declaration. A transcript of the trial is exhibited here for the first time. Tassi was found guilty and sentenced to banishment, only enforced later when he committed other crimes.

Artemisia was married off to a minor Florentine artist acquaintance of her father and lived in Florence for seven years until 1620. She bore four children, but only her daughter, Prudenza, survived childhood. Emerging from her father's shadow, Artemisia, far from being a victim, proved her fortitude and independence as an accomplished painter. She taught herself to read and write and established contacts that enabled her access to the Florentine court and ultimately to ruler Cosimo Medici. It is recorded that she performed at the Villa Medici in 1615, so her self portrait as a lute player may well be a representation of that occasion. Rediscovered in 2017, her self portrait as St Catherine of Alexandria was purchased by the National Gallery in 2018 and was the inspiration for this retrospective. Her hand rests on the martyrs' attribute, the broken spiked wheel, instrument of the torture, which failed to kill her (she was later beheaded). Artemisia's own unbroken spirit shines through in her commanding gaze and stance, holding the martyr's palm as if it were a paintbrush.

Two versions of her iconic *Judith Beheading Holofernes* hang side by side. Judith's maidservant is given prominence in pinning the Assyrian general down whilst Judith determinedly severs his head. The later picture uniquely portrays both women's blood-spattered arms and clothing with remarkable



*Judith beheading Holofernes; picture in the collection of the Museo di Capodimonte, Naples*

detail. Frequently interpreted as her fantasy revenge for her violation by Tassi, it is a powerful testimony to her great talent as a storyteller.

Artemisia was accepted as the first woman into Florence's great Academy of Arts. She moved in intellectual circles and befriended Galileo. Another exceptional rediscovered masterpiece is *Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy*. Mary leans back, her hands clasping her knees. Eyes closed, she is transported by the sounds of unseen angelic choirs into heavenly rapture.

Beset by debts and separated from her husband, Artemisia moved back to Rome. After a decade she settled in Naples, where she ran a successful studio with her daughter, sometimes collaborating with leading Neapolitan artists until her death around 1654. Artemisia painted her first altarpieces in Naples, two of which of which feature in the exhibition.

Around 1638-39 Artemisia came to London, where her ailing father was court painter. The finale of this breathtaking display focuses on her time here, when she may well have helped complete her father's painted ceiling at the Queen's House in Greenwich, as he died in February 1639. She painted *Self Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* in her 40s for Charles I, and it remains in the Royal Collection. It is not a literal self portrait, but a dynamic exposition of a woman artist at work, who had declared: '... you will find the spirit of Caesar in the soul of a woman', and 'I will show your Lordship what a woman can do'.

*The Artemisia Exhibition reopens at the National Gallery from 3 December – 24 January 2021. There is an Admission charge and Concessions are available.*

## On the death of Lord Sacks

**I mourn the death of former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and express my sorrow to the worldwide Jewish community on the loss of this great figure, assuring them of my prayers and condolences. I recall some of his forceful and persuasive presentations of the truths expressed in Judaism and indeed in the Christian faith, truths which help us to make sense of our lives, our communities and our destinies.**

When he met with Pope Benedict at St Mary's University on 17 September 2010, celebrating our commonalities and difference, he said: 'What led to secularisation was that people lost faith in the ability of people of faith to live peaceably together; and we must never go down that road again. We remember the fine words of John Henry Cardinal Newman, who said: "We should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend".'

Then he gave eloquent expression to our shared beliefs: 'In the face of a deeply individualistic culture we offer community. Against consumerism, we talk about the things that have value but not a price. Against cynicism, we dare to admire and respect. In the face of fragmenting families, we believe in consecrating relationships. We believe in marriage as a commitment, parenthood as a responsibility, and the poetry of everyday life; when it is etched, in homes and schools with the charisma of holiness and grace.'

I have lost a friend; the Jewish community a great leader; humanity an eloquent spokesman. May he rest in peace.

.....

## Celebrating a Significant Birthday

**I was most grateful to receive many messages of prayer and good wishes for 9 November, my 75th birthday. Not much of a celebration in these times, but a very happy day nonetheless.**

As you will understand, some time ago I wrote to the Holy Father offering my resignation from the Office of Archbishop of Westminster. With the arrival of the new Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Gugerotti, came the reply. The Holy Father formally accepts my resignation and, at the same time, has decided that I am to remain in office until, at his decision, other provision is made. When I wrote to Pope Francis I said that I was, peacefully, at his disposition. So it is in this same peaceful spirit that I will now continue as your bishop. I do so encouraged by the message from the Holy Father and supported by your prayers, continuing good will and patience with my shortcomings.

So, on we go! These days are not at all easy but we know the Lord never leaves our side. It is with his Spirit that we humbly seek to serve, as best we can. Please do keep up your good work, as I will strive to do, also. With warmest wishes,

+ Vincent Nichols

## Companions of Oremus

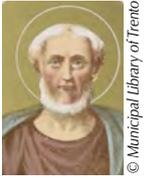
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**and of our anonymous Companions**

*If you would like to become a Companion of Oremus, see page 4*

Pope St Damasus I (c.305 – 384, feast day 11 December) was a Roman local boy, born to parents of Portuguese origin. His adolescent years coincided with the Emperor Constantine declaring religious freedom across the Roman Empire and throughout his life Damasus experienced and sometimes helped to negotiate the increasing presence and power of the Church. His accession to the throne of Peter in 366 was not without controversy and violence as different factions vied for control, but his sanctity must rest upon his work to establish true doctrine and, not least through his patronage of St Jerome, to define the canon of Holy Scripture and to ensure that it was preserved in the most accurate form possible. He also wrote epitaphs in praise of the martyrs for their tombs; the quality of his verse is not universally acknowledged.



An 1879 Chromolithograph of Pope St Damasus I

© Municipal Library of Trento

## The Month of December

### The Holy Father's Prayer Intention

**Evangelisation:** For a life of prayer – We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

*Please note that times of services and details of music to be sung have been planned to take account of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, but may be changed at short notice if required. Any changes will be published on the Cathedral website.*

### Tuesday 1 December *Ps Week 1*

Advent feria  
**9am, 5.30pm** Mass live streamed  
**10am – 3pm** Cathedral open for prayer

Public worship resumes at the following times, Monday to Saturday:  
**8am, 10.30am** (Latin), **12.30pm, 5.30pm** (live streamed) Mass  
**12 – 12.30pm, 5 – 5.30pm** Confessions  
**2 – 5pm Monday to Friday** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

### Wednesday 2 December

Advent feria

### Thursday 3 December

St Francis Xavier, Priest

### Friday 4 December *Friday abstinence*

St John Damascene, Priest & Doctor  
**7pm** Friends' Organ Recital (live streamed)

### Saturday 5 December

Advent feria

### Please note Sunday Mass times:

**8am** Mass  
**10.30am** Sung Mass (live streamed, Choir)  
**12.30pm** Mass (with Organ)  
**3pm** Solemn Vespers and Benediction  
**4pm** Mass  
**6pm** Mass (live streamed, with Organ)

### Sunday 6 December *Ps Week 2*

**2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**10.30am** Sung Mass (Full Choir)

*Victoria* – Missa Ave maris stella  
*Esquivel* – Vox clamantis in deserto  
 Organ: *Buxtehude* – Nun freut euch BuxWV 210  
**3pm** Solemn Vespers and Benediction  
*Andreas* – Magnificat octavi toni  
*Victoria* – Alma redemptoris mater a 5  
 Organ: *J. S. Bach* – Contrapunctus XI (Art of Fugue)

### Monday 7 December

St Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor

**Tuesday 8 December** *Ps Week 2*  
**THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, Patron of the Diocese**

**5.30pm** Sung Mass (Cantor and Boys' Voices)  
 Organ: *Tournemire* – Postlude (L'Orgue mystique II)

### Wednesday 9 December

Advent feria  
 (St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin)

### Thursday 10 December

Advent feria

### Friday 11 December *Friday abstinence*

Advent feria  
 (St Damasus I, Pope)

### Saturday 12 December

Our Lady of Guadalupe

### Sunday 13 December *Ps Week 3*

**3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Gaudete Sunday)**

**10.30am** Sung Mass (Full Choir)  
*Haydn* – Missa brevis Sancti Ioannis de Deo  
*Sweelinck* – Gaude et lætare  
 Organ: *Parry* – Chorale Prelude on St Thomas  
**3pm** Solemn Vespers and Benediction  
*Lassus* – Magnificat primi toni  
*Gibbons* – This is the record of John  
 Organ: *J. S. Bach* – Christ unser Herr BWV 684

### Monday 14 December

St John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor

### Tuesday 15 December

Advent feria  
**5.30pm** Mass attended by Diocesan Staff (Cardinal Nichols)

### Wednesday 16 December

Advent feria

### Thursday 17 December

Advent feria

### Friday 18 December *Friday abstinence*

Advent feria

### Saturday 19 December

Advent feria

### Sunday 20 December *Ps Week 4*

**4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**10.30am** Sung Mass (Full Choir)  
*Byrd* – Mass for five voices  
*Parsons* – Ave Maria  
 Organ: *Leighton* – Fantasy on Veni Emmanuel  
**3pm** Parish Carol Service (live stream only)  
 Organ: *J. S. Bach* – In dulci jubilo (BWV 729)

### Monday 21 December

Advent feria  
 (St Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor)  
**11am – 12.30pm, 5 – 5.30pm** Confessions, also on Tuesday and Wednesday

### Tuesday 22 December

Advent feria

### Wednesday 23 December

Advent feria  
 (St John of Kanty, Priest)

### Thursday 24 December (Christmas Eve)

Advent feria  
**8, 10.30am, 12.30pm** Mass  
**11am – 12.30pm** Confessions  
**3pm** Pontifical Solemn First Vespers of Christmas (Cardinal Nichols)  
*Buxtehude* – Magnificat in D  
*Victoria* – O magnum mysterium  
 Organ: *Vierne* – Final (Symphonie I)  
**4pm** First Mass of Christmas (with Organ & Cantor)  
**6pm** Vigil Mass of Christmas (with Organ & Cantor, live streamed)  
**8pm** Vigil Mass of Christmas (with Organ & Cantor)  
**10pm** Sung Pontifical Mass During the Night (Cardinal Nichols, live streamed only)  
*Haydn* – Missa Sancti Nicolai  
*Adam, arr. Rutter* – O holy night  
 Organ: *George Baker* – Toccata-Gigue on the Sussex Carol

**Friday 25 December****THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD***No Friday abstinence***8am** Mass of the Dawn**10.30am** Sung Pontifical Mass of the Day  
(Cardinal Nichols, live streamed)*Victoria* – Missa O magnum mysterium*Poulenc* – Hodie Christus natus estOrgan: *Vierne* – Finale (Symphonie VI)**12.30** Mass (with Organ & Cantor)**2.30 – 3.45pm** The Cathedral is closed**3pm** Solemn Pontifical Second Vespers  
(English) and Benediction (Cardinal  
Nichols, live streamed only)**4pm** Mass (with Organ)**4.45pm** The Cathedral closes**Saturday 26 December**

ST STEPHEN, the First Martyr

**10am-6pm** Cathedral open**10.30am, 12.30pm** Mass**5 – 5.30pm** Confessions**5.30pm** Mass (live streamed)**Sunday 27 December****THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY  
AND JOSEPH***Usual Sunday Mass times***10.30am** Sung Mass**3pm** Solemn Vespers (English) and  
Benediction

On following days:

**10am-5pm** Cathedral open**10.30am, 12.30pm** Mass**12 – 12.30pm** Confessions**5.30pm** Mass (live streamed only)**Monday 28 December**

THE HOLY INNOCENTS, Martyrs

**Tuesday 29 December**

ST THOMAS BECKET, Bishop &amp; Martyr,

Patron of the Parish Clergy

**Wednesday 30 December**6th DAY IN THE OCTAVE OF  
CHRISTMAS**Thursday 31 December**7th DAY IN THE OCTAVE OF  
CHRISTMAS

*Friday 1 January has the timetable,  
as above; normal timetable  
resumes on Saturday 2 January;  
and choral services resume on  
Tuesday 5 January (the Vigil of the  
Epiphany of the Lord).*

**Key to the Diary:** Saints' days and holy days written in **BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS** denote Sundays and Solemnities, CAPITAL LETTERS denote Feasts, and those not in capitals denote Memorials, whether optional or otherwise. Memorials in brackets are not celebrated liturgically.

**What Happens and When**

The Opening Hours of the Cathedral, the closures for cleaning and the times of public liturgy are published here in *Oremus*, on the Cathedral website and via Social Media. Please be assured that all booked Mass intentions continue to be fulfilled by the Chaplains.

**Throughout the Year**

At the time of going to press it remains unclear when and where it will be possible for the various groups attached to the Cathedral to meet. As soon as information becomes known, it will be published in the weekly Newsletter and on the News pages of the Cathedral website. Thank you for your patience.

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# Life on the Rollercoaster

There is something of a rollercoaster element to Cathedral life at the moment, so three images here may reflect that. On the one hand, life goes on. Whilst delayed, the ordination of three men to the Permanent Diaconate was able to go ahead at the end of October. Bishop Paul McAleenan was celebrant of the Ordination Mass, seen here with the new Deacons Paul O'Connor (for St Albans South parish), Jonathan Chappell (for Hendon parish) and Andrew Safo-Poku (for Stonebridge parish). Presently there are 34 such deacons working across the diocese and 10 more are in training – so, it seems, life goes on.



*Bishop Paul with the newly-ordained Deacons*



*The 'Last Mass'*



*Some of all the Saints*

Or does it? The wide-angle image of the Cathedral shows the congregation present at the 5.30pm Mass on Wednesday 4 November, the last public Mass before the month's lockdown came into effect. The BBC came along to film, perhaps encouraged to do so by the public statements of the Cardinal and other religious leaders questioning whether there was any evidence at all that public worship constituted a threat to health. But the Cathedral doors had to be closed for a month – at least for Mass. Three days earlier, though, a large congregation was present at all the Masses. For All Saints' Day what looked like half of the whole company of heaven crowded together on the gradine of the high altar. We are used to six reliquaries being on display on the solemn feast days of the year, but here they were joined by the relics of a number of other saints that the Cathedral possesses. These normally live in the reliquary cabinets in the crypt, so it was good for them to have an airing and for us to be reminded visibly of their example and their prayers.

# RE and Catholic Schools

Bishop Marcus Stock

**As a religious community we value our partnership with the government in the provision of Catholic education. It is a partnership which has flourished over the last 170 years. The fruit of this partnership is the network of more than 2,200 Catholic schools across England and Wales, making the Church the second-largest provider of education in the country.**

This relationship has been a resounding success on a secular as well as a pastoral and spiritual level. Not only are Catholic schools some of the highest achieving in the country, they are also considerably more ethnically diverse and take in significantly more pupils from the poorest households than the national average.

With this profile and record, the future existence of Catholic schools should be uncontroversial. However, we know this is not the case. Nationally, there are a number of organisations campaigning either to end the provision of schools in England which have a religious character or to transform the curriculum in such a way that it would remove the ability of Catholic schools to maintain their specific ethos. It is this ethos which makes our Catholic schools so unique and successful.

So now, more than ever before, we cannot take the future of Catholic schools for granted. When political parties are canvassing for our support, it is important that we ask about a party's commitment to our community's precious schools. A legislative agenda can have a direct impact on both Catholic education and the curriculum that is taught in Catholic schools. We must be conscious, too, that some political parties, while holding favourable views on schools with a religious character generally, also hold policies that could damage Catholic education

specifically. Therefore, it is vital to know where both national and local government stand on the following issues.

## Core principles

It is not sufficient for a Catholic school just to be called 'Catholic'. There are core principles which protect their ethos and the distinctive education they provide. Among these are the ability to give priority in the school's admissions criteria to Catholic children, the bishop's right to appoint the majority of the school's governors, the right to reserve the school's senior leadership posts for Catholics; and the right to teach and inspect Catholic Religious Education.

## Religious Education

Religious Education lies at the centre of the core curriculum in Catholic schools. Ten per cent of school time is dedicated to the subject and it is an academically rigorous theological discipline. Recently we have seen calls to abolish this and rename it 'Worldviews' with a nationally set curriculum. Not only would this change the nature of the subject and reduce its importance, it could also result in the state determining how and what the Church teaches about the Catholic faith in Catholic schools - something that would be totally unacceptable.

## Support for school leaders, teachers and staff

Our school leaders, teachers and support staff are outstanding in the work they do. We need to ensure that political parties are committed to supporting teachers and the vocation of teaching. We hope that government will continue to provide support for the formation of Catholic teachers through continuing professional development and teacher training.

## Relationships and Sex Education

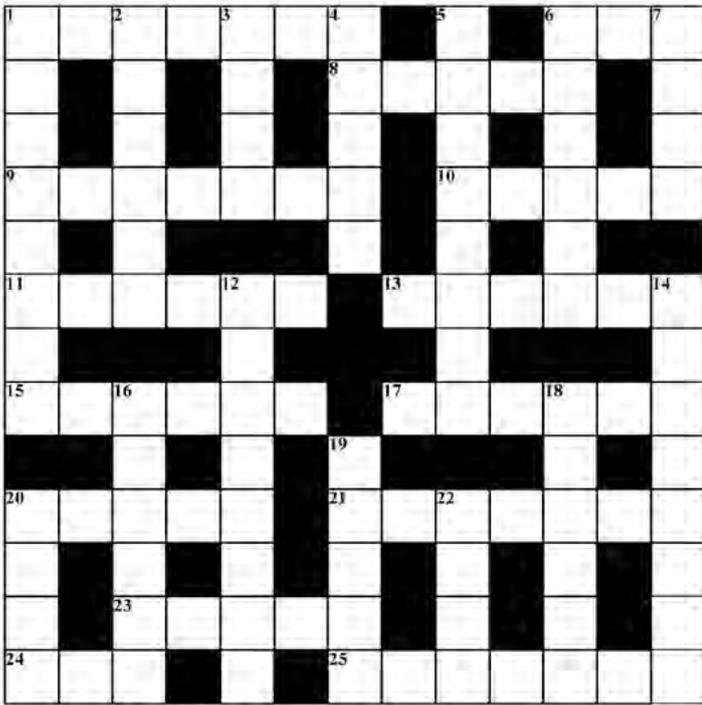
Catholic education is based on the formation of the whole child. Well-taught and age-appropriate Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is an important part of this. However, even more important is the right of parents, as the primary educators of their children, to be fully consulted and to maintain their ability to withdraw their children from these lessons. While we are confident that the model curriculum in Catholic schools delivers RSE in accordance with the teachings of the Church and the wishes of parents, the same cannot be said for other schools. Hence for Catholic parents who do not have the option to send their child to a Catholic school, it is vital that this parental right remains in place.

## New Catholic schools

Since 2010, the Church has had to find space for an additional 50,000 pupils without being able to open new schools. As a community, we need to make sure that political parties remain committed to supporting the opening of new Catholic schools without a restriction on the proportion of Catholic children that they are free to admit.

As a Catholic community, we have provided our schools as part of our commitment to the common good of society and the education of young people in our country. For many years these schools have flourished. Now it is time to speak up for them and do our civic and Catholic duty to ensure that they can continue to flourish for many years to come.

*Bishop Marcus is Bishop of Leeds and chairs the Department for Education and Formation of the Bishops' Conference. He wrote this piece before the last General Election, but his points remain relevant to our present situation.*



Alan Frost December 2020 – No. 83

**Clues Across**

- 1 Platform from which conductor is visible to orchestra and choir (7)
- 6 White vestment worn by priest under chasuble (3)
- 8 Small coral type of **15 Across**
- 9 Vatican Chapel with famous Michelangelo ceiling (7)
- 10 Relationship of Rachel to Rebecca [Genesis] (5)
- 11 Members of a choir or soloists like Pavarotti (6)
- 13 Eric -----, composer of A London Suite and The Dam Busters March (6)
- 15 Holy ----- or Lindisfarne, associated with St Cuthbert (6)
- 17 Saint to whom the Bell in the Cathedral Tower is dedicated (6)
- 20 & **16 Down:** St Thomas Aquinas' hymn, sung in part (Tantum Ergo) at Benediction (5,6)
- 21 Get better after illness (7)
- 23 Lending money at immorally high rates of interest (5)
- 24 'Linden ---', English folk song set to music by Vaughan Williams (3)
- 25 A very private, perhaps sacred, room (7)

**Clues Down**

- 1 Christina, of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, wrote In The Bleak Midwinter (8)
- 2 Judge betrayed by Delilah at the cost of his great strength [OT] (6)
- 3 Familiar reference to Charity that saves lives at sea (1.1.1.1.)
- 4 'Alma Redemptoris -----', seasonal antiphon sung to the Blessed Virgin (5)
- 5 Copy a file onto one's own computer (8)
- 6 Prince who brought family Christmas tree idea from his native Germany (6)
- 7 'The ---- Army of Our Lady' [World Apostolate of Fatima] (4)
- 12 Person coming second in the final of a competition (8)
- 14 Cloth in Oviedo Cathedral held to bear the image of Christ's face (8)
- 16 See **20 Across**
- 18 Period leading up to Christmas (6)
- 19 Offers up the mind and the heart to God (5)
- 20 Cardinal George ----, exonerated of false accusations and received by the Pope recently (4)
- 22 Extended family members of Scottish descent (4)

**ANSWERS**

**Across:** 1 Rostum 6 Alb 8 Atoll 9 Sistine 10 Nice 11 Tears  
 13 Coates 15 Island 17 Edward 20 Pange 21 Recover 23 Usury  
 24 Lea 25 Sanctum **Down:** 1 Rossetti 2 Samson 3 RNLI 4 Mater  
 5 Download 6 Albert 7 Blue 12 Runner-up 14 Sudarium 16 Lingua  
 18 Advent 19 Prays 20 Pell 22 Clan

# Advent Calendar

Rowan Williams

He will come like last leaf's fall.

One night when the November wind  
 has flayed the trees to bone, and earth  
 wakes choking on the mould,  
 the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.  
 One morning when the shrinking earth  
 opens on mist, to find itself  
 arrested in the net  
 of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.  
 One evening when the bursting red  
 December sun draws up the sheet  
 and penny-masks its eye to yield  
 the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,  
 will come like crying in the night,  
 like blood, like breaking,  
 as the earth writhes to toss him free.  
 He will come like child.

Rowan Williams was formerly Archbishop of Canterbury and has recently retired as Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge.



© aesop

To submit a poem whether by yourself or another for consideration, please contact the Editor – details on page 3.

# Zooming In and Out



*Peace and War (1629) by Peter Paul Rubens*

Christina White

**I signed up for a Zoom talk given by a very well-known art historian (WKAH). I am familiar with WKAH's performances on national television, but the PowerPoint failed to load, the link buffered, and other attendees refused to mute despite the best efforts of the personal assistant. WKAH swore and cursed at the end and said it had been one of those weeks when everything had gone wrong. We didn't mind, 'tis human after all, but in future I will view his expositions on Giotto and the rest with a certain wry amusement. Never underestimate the skill of the cameraman and the editor.**

A speaker who had no problems whatsoever with Zoom was Professor Caroline Barron, who spoke eloquently about St Thomas Becket and specifically the saint's links with London. On her recommendation I purchased two maps from the London Topographical Society, showing Tudor London and Medieval London. I recommend both. It is moving to see the number of chapels and religious houses which dominated the pre-Reformation city. I am currently in touch with a professor from Exeter who has written on the Friaries of Medieval London. It would be interesting to book him as a speaker and, when life is 'back to normal', to set up a walking tour of the City to see the sites of the great religious houses.

Dr John Harvey also showed himself to be a natural communicator with his talk on Peter Paul Rubens. It was his

first venture into Zoom, and he gave an accomplished lecture that left us all wanting to visit the National Gallery (then closed) to see Rubens' great Peace and War painting. It's fair to say that the Friends have got much better at Zoom, but our first foray into video with our online Sacristy Tour had slightly mixed results. Richard Hawker showed his brilliant knowledge, but the track was overlaid with muzak and the zooming in on detail left one feeling slightly nauseous; or maybe that was just me? We will persist. The Cathedral's planned new website comes on apace and video links are so important in communicating what the Cathedral is and does.

We have additions to the online events programme this month with a free talk by Peter Howell on Cathedral architect John Francis Bentley and an art history tour with Paul Pickering. Fr Andrew Gallagher will be the quizmaster for our Christmas quiz, the last event of the year. Don't forget that the Friends have also been running an online Zoom tea and coffee morning after the Sunday 10.30am Mass.

As I write, the Cathedral is waiting for Thursday 3 December and the re-opening of churches for Mass and public worship. The Cathedral has been open for private prayer during this time of waiting and it has been very moving to see the number of people coming to sit before the Blessed Sacrament. The Cathedral is always a prayerful space, but especially so at this time.

We are encouraging all our Friends to 'Give the Gift of Friendship' this Christmas. Buy a gift membership and the recipient will receive a Cathedral tote bag. For details, please contact the office. Payment for all new subscriptions, for events and donations may be made via our Virgin Money Giving Account: <https://tinyurl.com/FRIENDS-VMG> We are accepting cheques, but please, if booking, send well in advance of the event.

And finally, thank you for your support in a difficult year. I wish you a blessed Advent and a Happy and Holy Season. Keep well.

## Forthcoming Events

**Tuesday 1 December – 12pm Tuesday 8 December:** The Big Give Campaign for 'Communications for Westminster Cathedral'. All donations will be classed as 'in memory' of Canon Christopher Tuckwell RIP. <https://tinyurl.com/FriendsBigGive>

**Wednesday 2 December:** John Francis Bentley – Architect of Westminster Cathedral. Zoom talk by Peter Howell on his latest book. 7pm. This talk is free for all, but you must pre-register to receive the online link.

**Friday 4 December:** A Friends' Online Concert of Organ Music for Advent with Assistant Master of Music, Peter Stevens. 7pm. Tickets £10. Afterwards, join in with the post-concert free Zoom drinks party.

**Tuesday 8 December:** Art history Zoom talk with Paul Pickering: The paintings of the Nativity. 7pm. £5

**Thursday 10 December:** The Cathedral Christmas Quiz with quizmaster Cathedral Chaplain Fr Andrew Gallagher. Fr Slawomir Witon, our new Administrator, will be joining the fray. Please wear a Christmas jumper and enter into the festivities. 7pm £10

All payments should be made via our Virgin Money Giving site. Payments for events are not eligible for Gift Aid <https://tinyurl.com/FRIENDS-VMG>

## Contact us

- Write to: Friends' Office, 42 Francis Street, London SW1P 1QW
  - Call: 020 7798 9059
  - Email: [friends@westminstercathedral.org.uk](mailto:friends@westminstercathedral.org.uk)
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## CATHEDRAL HISTORY – A PICTORIAL RECORD

## The Official Opening of the Cathedral Piazza, December 1975

Paul Tobin

**Weeks after the funeral of John Carmel Cardinal Heenan, the official opening of the piazza was carried out by Bishop Christopher Butler OSB in his capacity as Vicar Capitular of the diocese during the interregnum until the appointment of the next archbishop (Abbot Basil Hume OSB) in February 1976.**

Redevelopment of this area of Victoria Street started in 1959 with the closure and subsequent demolition of the Stag Brewery opposite the Cathedral on the site where Cardinal Place now stands. Hidden from view in Victoria Street by large buildings used mainly for offices, access to the Cathedral was only available through Ashley Place. Opposite the Cathedral were three retail outlets, one of which was the Art and Book shop, run by Anthony Bartlett, brother of the former Cathedral Administrator, Mgr Canon Francis Bartlett and *Gentiluomo* to four archbishops. This shop dealt with religious artefacts, antiques and church furniture. The other two outlets were Burns & Oates and the Catholic Truth Society bookshops. These were all demolished as part of the development of the area.

In the picture, Bishop Butler can be seen under the canopy on the right with a commemorative plaque (since removed) to the left of the canopy. Readers will notice how the piazza has changed in the 45 years since its opening; the raised flowerbeds have gone and more importantly, Disability Discrimination legislation meant that access to the Cathedral needed to be improved. In 2010, therefore, 'a new arrangement was made, the step line being brought forward in a sweeping curve to accommodate ramped access to either side behind the new step'.<sup>1</sup>

The space in front of the Cathedral has drawn many people to the building who otherwise may not have known of its existence, due to it being hidden



by the tall buildings of Victoria Street. It has also allowed large crowds to assemble in front of the Cathedral, most memorably in 1982 on the occasion of the visit of Pope St John Paul II and subsequently a decade ago in 2010 with the visit of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. Most recently it has accommodated the queues of the faithful who have gathered waiting patiently for the main

doors to be opened before Sunday Masses in particular during the months of restricted opening hours due to the coronavirus-imposed cleaning schedules in the Cathedral.

**Acknowledgments:**

1. St Ann's Gate Architects LLP, The Close Salisbury, SP1 2EB (2012)

Image: Post Card IM/L&T/976- Cathedral Archives.

# Virtual School and Real School

Jhennielle (Year 6)

**During this pandemic, we have missed many school activities we had been looking forward to, but it is imperative that we still keep soldiering on with our education at school and at home. As a daughter of key workers, I was able to come to school during the first lockdown. I was put in a class of ten pupils with a mixture of different aged pupils, which meant I did not have the opportunity to see all my friends from my year group. We were lucky enough to have a Mass which was conducted by Cardinal Vincent via zoom at Westminster Cathedral.**



While at home last week during virtual school, we participated in class meetings on Google Classrooms to keep up with our learning. At the beginning of our session, we would start the day with a morning prayer and reflection. The whole class, along with the teacher, would pray together and we could all observe each other doing so. This would also take place when we started our afternoon session. These sessions reminded us that, rather than being at home, we were all together in a classroom setting and we should behave accordingly.

In one of our online Religious Education lessons, we talked about vocations and how people with different vocations influence our own lives; this led us on to our school mission statement 'Love one another as I have loved you' and the commitments we make when fulfilling it. We discussed about the priesthood and the serious commitments priests make just so that they can be closer to God. The lesson also included people in our own lives who inspire us. For me that person is my mother. She is a nursing assistant who works for the NHS, so not only does she help my siblings and me but also people she comes across in her job every day. These lessons

allowed us to see one another and to participate in the conversation by raising our hand and waiting patiently to take our turn to add our thoughts to the discussion.

Now that we are back in school, we are focusing on our new topic, Judaism, a religion that started around 4,000 years ago in Israel now with over 12 million followers. In these lessons, we have been learning about *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year that usually takes place in autumn. This event lasts for ten days. They eat apples with honey, which represents a sweet new year and have special bread called *challah* that is shaped round to symbolize eternal life. The last two days of *Rosh Hashanah* are called *Yom Kippur* and those two days are for fasting and holy services. I find it interesting learning about other faiths.

If someone were to ask me what I preferred when comparing virtual learning at home to actually being in school, I would have no hesitation in choosing being at school and taking part in everything that school life has to offer, which includes spending time with my school family.



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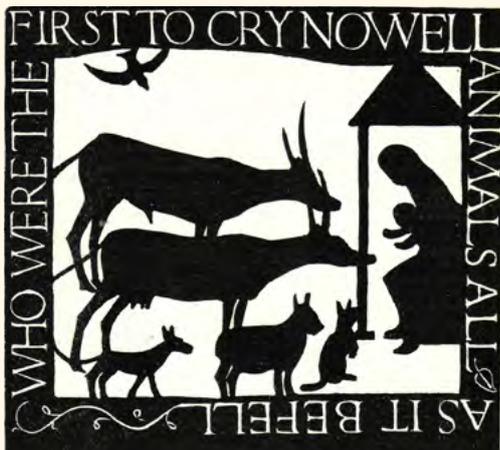
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# In retrospect: from the *Cathedral Chronicle*

Varia

As the authorities this year decided not to repeat the dramatic announcement by means of maroons of Armistice Hour on November 11, the two minutes of silence for special remembrance of our fallen warriors was not as outwardly effective as last year. Nevertheless, the absence of the arresting, and, for some, rather nerve-racking reminder by maroons afforded evidence of something more deep and impressive. Victoria is a busy place, indeed, yet it was obvious that people in this crowded neighbourhood of converging traffic were alertly mindful of the eleventh hour, and punctually to the minute by the clock to be seen at the Vauxhall Bridge Road terminus, silence and stillness fell with a rapidity that came as a surprise to those less heedful of the hour. Surely the result of this 'holy and wholesome thought' of our dead warriors is unmeasured in its good influence. This brief great silence at Armistice Hour is in principle in unconscious agreement with Catholic doctrine 'to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins'. For is it fond memory only that fills these two great minutes of silence and sends the nation in a might pilgrimage to the Cenotaph – that gaunt symbol before which now stands banked high a maze of flowers and wreaths? Is no prayer uttered by those vast crowds who pass it with bared heads? Empty sentiment may move some, but we prefer to think that amongst the majority much 'holy and wholesome thought' centres round the Cenotaph and finds its outlet in prayer for the dead. Would that the full Catholic teaching on this and other doctrines might lead them in the way of peace!



*This is the frontispiece of the December 1920 Westminster Cathedral Chronicle*

The renewed effort made by a Sunday paper of the Northcliffe Press to increase its circulation by again widely advertising the publication of further spiritualistic 'revelations' by Mr Vale

Owen fills us with shame and disgust. That this appalling nonsense should be put into print at all is astounding enough, but that such spiritualistic drivel should be made, with blatant acclamation, the means of vaunted increase of circulation is a desecration even of modern journalism.

*from the December 1920 Westminster Cathedral Chronicle*

.....

The Christmas Message of Cardinal Heenan

If anything were needed to put the Catholics of England into a festive mood for Christmas the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs [which had been celebrated in Rome on 25 October 1970 – Ed.] supplied it. We no longer shout with joy when we want to express publicly our gratitude for the faith. We have been schooled in recent years against saying or doing anything that could be interpreted as triumphalism. This puritan diet to which we have rigorously adhered since the Council was beginning to undermine our spiritual stamina. We had almost begun to think it sinful to take pride in our Church. Then came the canonisation to remind us that Catholics should be jolly and courageous, holy and loyal. The Martyrs died cheerfully – some with a joke on their lips while standing by the gallows – but literally in deadly earnest when protesting that they would rather die than betray the Catholic religion.

So the Martyrs have set us in right mood for Christmas.

These men and women, despite bitter persecution, never hated their tormentors. They genuinely loved their fellow countrymen and wished them well. When they prayed for their Queen, their judges and even their executioners they were not cynics scoring a point nor defeated soldiers firing a Parthian shot. Their outlook was quite uncomplicated. They loved their faith and they loved their country. Whether their fellow citizens were Catholics or Protestants was God's affair. He alone gives faith.

The Martyrs did not judge or condemn. Enough for them to know they must be ready to take up the cross. They preached by their example more often than by their words. The priests among them like St Edmund Campion did, of course, also give eloquent testimony by word. But most of them were content just to lead zealous Catholic lives. They loved the Mass and Our Lady. They were a contented band. The grace to imitate them is the most suitable gift for which to pray this Christmas of the canonisation. The return gift we make to the Child for His birthday is the same each year. We offer Him ourselves. He does not laugh at us and throw back our useless gift in our faces. That is the measure of the mystery of God's love.

*from the December 1970 Westminster Cathedral News Sheet*