Issue no 48
November 2026

Wrecsam Clarion

The newsletter of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham – serving the parishes of North and Mid Wales

To make clearly known
To declare
To clarify
To call to prayer

November, the month of the Holy Souls, after the great feast of All Saints. The western world remembers the dead of two World Wars, and many continuing conflicts. Liturgically, we move towards Advent, and the end of Ordinary Time

Contents of this month's 'Clarion'

Page 2 **Bishop's Column**

World Mission Day
Demographic Analysis
'Venite Ad Me'
Prayer Intentions

Page 7 **Around the Diocese**

Events, Engagements
The SVP

Advent Family Day

Page 3 **St Beuno's Outreach**

Prayer for Pope Leo
Prayers for those suffering cancer

Page 8 **From a Parishioner**

The Kingfisher catches fire
Gerard Manley Hopkins

Who Do You Say That I Am?
(photo; author unknown)

Page 4 **Gospel Year of Matthew**

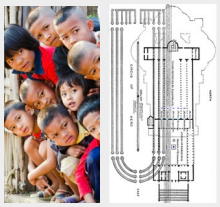
Christ the King
Reflection on St Mother Teresa

Eco-Network

A Depiction of Jesus calling the Disciples.
Photo: Vatican News

Page 9-10 **Venite Ad Me**

A Vatican News Synopsis
'Transmission of Faith'



Page 5 **The Wider Community**

World Day of the Poor
World day for Migrants

4th Centenary of St. Peter's Basilica

Basilica of Maxentius, Rome
Photo: public domain, wikimedia

Page 11 **Various**

Legacy
What is a Basilica?
Red Wednesday

In the Spotlight

Page 6 **Ordination**

The Ministry of Acolyte
St Anne's Wrexham

Page 12 **A Gallimaufry**

Saints of November
Statue of Our Lady of Fatima

From the Editor's desk

Welcome to this issue of the 'Clarion', number 48. Just two to reach the half century! By this time, you will recognise the pattern, but please remember that it is here to serve you, the parishioners of the Diocese of Wrexham to inform, make known, to clarify, and to act as a call to prayer. Your reaction is important, so do contribute to clarion@rcdwxm.org.uk with suggestions, comments and any articles.

This month, with the regular contributions from Bp Peter, St. Beuno's, Matthew's Gospel, take a look at the place where St Peter was crucified, consider how you can make Christmas 'green', and delve a little more deeply into Gerard Manley Hopkins. At the same time, consider action for Red Wednesday, and Days for the Poor and Migrants. Make a date for the Advent Family Day -a day of fun and prayer in Colwyn Bay. Make sure that you book in advance to be sure of your place.

Clarion can be YOUR voice as well. Get in touch, make a contribution of events in YOUR parish.

I hope you enjoy this issue!

Visit the Diocesan website: rcdwxm.org.uk

Bishop's Column

The analysis of statistics on World Mission Day last month paint a global picture of Catholicism marked by demographic growth among the faithful and a slight recovery in the number of clergy after years of decline. According to the data in the report, the number of Catholics worldwide reached 1,422,144,000, an increase of 16,690,000 -measured by baptisms- compared to the previous year, maintaining the share at 17.8% of the world's population.

Behind these global figures lie very diverse geographical realities. While the Americas remain the continent with the highest number of baptisms (678.8 million), Africa clearly leads the Church's dynamism: it registers the largest increase in new Catholics—with almost 7.6 million more—and is now slightly ahead of Europe in total number of faithful (288.3 million compared to 287.2 million). Europe, for its part, confirms an upward trend in the number of baptisms for the second year in a row, adding 911,000 new faithful.

For the first time in five years, the total number of priests worldwide has increased. With a total of 407,421 priests, the global figure has risen by 425. This positive balance is driven by growth in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, which has offset the continued declines recorded in Europe and Oceania. Despite this slight overall increase, the growth in the faithful means the global average is 3,491 Catholics per priest. If that average were applied to this diocese we are very generously provided for with one (non-retired) priest (N.30) for every 140 Mass attendees (N.4185) on the current approximate census statistics.

The Document *Venite ad me* "Come to me, [*all you who labour and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest*" *(Mt 11:28*)] from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith about 'Consideration of the Transmission of the Faith in an Epochal Change' is particularly pertinent to our own considerations about the future of the Diocese (cf. Into the Future IV).

Imagine for a moment if Wrexham Diocese fitted the average ratio of priests to lay faithful, we would have little more than one priest alone. The words of the Considerations deserve our reflection: 'These *Considerations* are intended, above all, to take up anew, for the whole ecclesial community, the invitation that the Holy Father Leo XIV extended to the Italian bishops when he met with them in June 2025: *"First of all, there is a need for renewed zeal in the proclamation and transmission of faith. It is a question of placing Jesus Christ at the centre of our proclamation and of our existence and, following the path indicated by Evangelii Gaudium, helping people to live out a personal relationship with him, to discover the joy of the Gospel."* The phrases that are underlined are of my emphasis.

A summary of the Considerations is to be found in this issue of Clarion and I commend the document to you in order that our consideration about personal, parish and diocesan mission might be further inspired and formed.

Attendance by at least one person (Organist, Choir Leader, etc.) from each parish at the forthcoming Diocesan Music Day 'Come and Sing! - Music for Advent' is one way we are able to respond to Chapter V 'The Transmission Faith in Communities.'

Those who attend are then able to share with fellow musicians and the congregation the musical and liturgical formation they will have received. This is one step in the 'proclamation and transmission of faith within and by the parish community. In the coming months other study formation days will be organised for catechists, liturgical ministers, study group convenors and others within the Diocese.

I am grateful to all who through their parishes have contributed to the *Into the Future* IV consultations. Those contributions will all be consolidated and funnelled through your Priests and Deans (Vicars Forane) to me for reflection and particular action following further local consultation with the relevant communities.

By the time I write again, this year of the Church will have come to a close and a new year begun and so I wish you a blessed month and a holy, joyous and expectant Advent

With all good wishes and the assurance of my continued prayer for you all, **✝ Peter.**

THE CYCLE OF PRAYER:

From September to Christ the King, we are asked to pray for these intentions:

The Spread of the Gospel; Students and Teachers;
The Harvest;
The Fruits of Human Work and the Reverent Use of Creation;
Justice and Peace in the World;
All Victims of War; Young People;
Prisoners and their Families.

THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION – November

For the proper use of wealth.

Let us pray for the proper use of wealth; that, not succumbing to the temptation of selfishness, it may always be put at the service of the common good and solidarity of those who have less.

We make our friends; we make our enemies; but it is God who makes our next door neighbour *(GK Chesterton)*
Welfare is for a purpose: Christian love is for a person *(Mother Teresa)*

St Beuno's Outreach
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

Praying with St Beuno's Outreach: 'As one friend to another …'

Each month, St Beuno's Outreach invites you to pray with an image and a verse of Scripture or other material

In this month of November, we give thanks for the progress Pope Leo has made following his recent surgery for lung cancer. As we continue to pray for him, we also keep in our prayer all those who suffer from cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.

Thanks to screening and early detection, as well as progress with new therapies such as immunotherapy and other targeted therapies, a cancer diagnosis is now increasingly treated as a manageable chronic condition or a curable illness. Many patients, carers and families are able to live with hope. But for those facing a difficult prognosis, or when fear or pain threaten to take over, or treatment is difficult to bear, we reflect on these words from an unknown author:

Cancer is so limited …
It cannot cripple love,
It cannot shatter hope,
It cannot corrode faith,
It cannot destroy peace,
It cannot kill friendship,
It cannot suppress memories,
It cannot silence courage,
It cannot invade the soul,
It cannot steal eternal life,
It cannot conquer the spirit.

One way of praying this text might be to take one line at a time and reflect on how it applies to your life, or to the life of the sick person for whom or with whom you pray.

You might like to consider the love around you, the people who love you unconditionally and will continue to love you, regardless of your state of health.

Or you may call to mind the memories you have of people and situations, the good and the bad. They are yours forever.

As you work your way down the poem, pause after each line, and give thanks to the Lord for being with you today.

At the end of your prayer, you may like to pause awhile and listen:

Do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

And so we pray for Pope Leo:

Heavenly Father,
we pray for our Holy Father, Pope Leo, following his recent cancer diagnosis.
Lord Jesus, we thank you for guiding him safely through his surgery,
and we ask that you complete the work of healing you have begun in him.
Grant him physical strength,
and give him peace of mind.
Keep him safely in your loving hands
so that he may continue to shepherd your Church.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

We also keep in our prayers all who are sick and those who care for them
May the Lord give them courage, strength and hope. Amen.

More from St Beuno's Outreach
You can download our *prayer resources for the Sunday Scripture readings* as the weekly Prego and Prego Plus at https://stbeunosoutreach.wordpress.com/

Gospel Year of Matthew

The Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. …

For I was hungry and you gave me food, …"

Then he will say to those on his left,

"Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

For I was hungry and you gave me no food, …"

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

Matthew 25:31,34-35a,41-42a, 46. *ESV-CE*

Commentary:

The entire passage of the gospel concerning Christ the King's judgement of the nations is: Matthew **25:31-46**. In these verses Jesus' prophecy of the Last Judgement unfolds at two historic levels. i. He initially foretells the judgement of Old Covenant Israel. Spoken of and described by the prophet Ezekiel (34:17-22) This involves God's "coming" to Jerusalem (A.D.70) as the Shepherd who separates the faithful sheep of Israel from the wicked goats (10:23; 16:27-28). ii. He ultimately foretells the General Judgement at the end of history. This will involve Christ's Second Coming and the general resurrection of all people before his throne to be **blessed** or **cursed** (25:41) according to their deeds (Jn5:25-29; Rev.20:11-12; cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC).1038-39)

25:40 you did it to me: Jesus identifies himself with all persons, especially the poor and the afflicted. Thus by serving others we serve Christ; by performing works of mercy we hope to find mercy (Jas.2:1-13). Indeed Jesus' own ministry was marked by concern for the disadvantaged (4:23-24; 8:1-17; 11:4-6)

25:41 the eternal fire: A description of hell. Here the wicked are consigned to eternal punishment with the devil and his fallen angels (Mk9:48; 2Pet.2-; Rev.20:10; cf. CCC 1033-35)

Prayerful Reflection:

Few people have given themselves to the poor and forgotten like Mother Teresa [St. Teresa of Kolkata]. The generosity of Jesus was openly manifest through her life of untiring service to those in the most desperate situations imaginable. She knew as well as any that ministering to our fellow human beings means ministering to the Lord Jesus himself whose image she saw in the faces of the poor. Consider her powerful words that reference our passage: "In order to help us deserve heaven, Christ set a condition that at the moment of our death you and I, whoever we might have been and wherever we have lived, Christians and non-Christians alike, every human being who has been created by the living hand of God in his own image, shall stand in his presence and be judged according to what we have been for the poor, what we have done for them."

Mother Teresa, Heart of Joy: The transforming Power of Selfgiving. Ed. J.L.Gonzalez-Balado. Servant Books ©1987

A message from the Wrexham Diocese Eco- Network!

We've all heard of a white Christmas, but now everyone's talking about a green Christmas!

For this month's Eco-Network article, we thought we would give some festive eco ideas.

We know that the cost of living is playing out in different ways so just pick and choose what suits you!

We hope you have a peaceful and relaxing Advent season, taking time to notice the presence of God in every autumn leaf or frosted blade of grass.

Food: Where's your Christmas meat and veg coming from? Have the animals been raised ethically and sustainably? Use local butchers or farms. You may be surprised to find local growers near you.

Chocolate and beverages Fairtrade tastes great and pays the farmers fairly. Wine, tea, coffee – look out for the logo. Is your parish serving Fairtrade refreshments?

Decorations: Why not create homemade Christmas decorations, using recycled materials or buy ones made of paper or textiles. Have a look online for some great inspiration https://www.pillarboxblue.com/recycled-christmas-decorations/

Gifts Do you really need it? Or do ***they*** really need it? Some thoughtfulness over quantity. Can you buy it locally?

World gifts: You can buy fruit tree saplings, chickens, goats or clean water at Christian Aid's Charity Gifts, or bees, a vegetable garden or a greenhouse at CAFOD's equivalent World Gifts. Have you thought of toilet twinning?! https://toilettwinning.org/

Gifting plants, seeds, or growing boxes eg.mushroom boxes

Reimagining gift wrapping – no foil wrapping paper, reusable materials: fabric/scarves/Paper bags/boxes decorate them yourselves. Or even newspaper?! Reduce online shopping from platforms known for their reliance on single-use plastic packaging.

Experiences with material possessions:

tickets/workshops/classes to learn new skills, or a subscription for a veg box or quarterly Positive News magazine. TryEco-refills

WORLD DAY OF POOR - SUNDAY 15TH NOVEMBER

In his message for the 10th World Day of the Poor, Pope Leo XIV reflects on God "the refuge of the poor," urging Christians to rediscover the central place of the poor and examine our commitment to justice, solidarity, and human dignity.

Reflecting on Psalm 14, "The Lord is the refuge of the poor," the Pope notes that these words were written during a dramatic period marked by the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, when the people "felt deprived of God's presence and experienced unprecedented material and moral misery." The Holy Father observes that Psalm 14 continues to speak to every generation.

Citing his Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*, Pope Leo reaffirms that "God shows a preference for the poor" and that the Church "must be a Church of the Beatitudes, one that makes room for the little ones and walks poor with the poor."

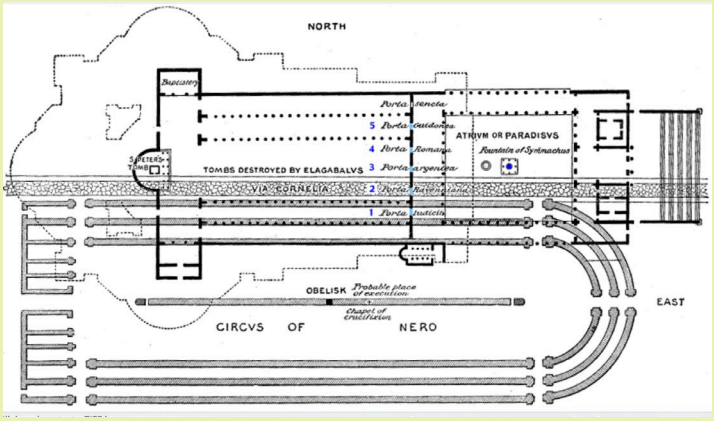
"We wish to bear witness," he writes, bringing his message to a close, "that it is possible, even today, to experience the same joy by putting ourselves in the shoes of the poor and listening to them rather than merely speaking about them."

Finally, he expresses hope that this World Day of the Poor will help Christians "rediscover the faces of so many brothers and sisters who seek refuge in God and long to feel at home in our communities."

The full message can be read on the Vatican website: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/poor/documents/20260613-messaggio-giornata-poveri.html

Resources for parishes and schools are available: https://www.csan.org.uk/world-day-of-the-poor-2026-resource/

Diagram of **the Circus of Nero**, the **Constantine Basilica** of St. Peter in the Vatican, and the **modern Basilica**
(For details, see column, right)



Plan of Old St. Peter's, showing its relation to the circus of Nero. The plan is in the public domain.

The cross on the spina (spine of the circus) marks the probable place of execution of St. Peter (Chapel of the Crucifixion).

This picture is part of a chapter of: Pagan and Christian Rome by Rodolfo Lanciani published by Houghton, Mifflin and Company Boston and New York, 1892

WORLD DAY FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The Church has been celebrating the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR) since 1914. It is always an occasion to express concern for different vulnerable people on the move; to pray for them as they face many challenges; and to increase awareness about the opportunities that migration offers.

Theme and Message

In his Message for the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees on 27th September and observed in England and Wales on Thursday 3rd December the Holy Father gave the theme "Even Just One of These Children," Pope Leo XIV says that the cry of the displaced appeals to the conscience of all. Read the Pope's message.

In his message Bishop McAleenan, for the bishops of England and Wales, calls for Catholics to consider the plight of child migrants and refugees when we speak to others about this polarising topic:

"You may not personally know any of these migrant and refugee children who are among us," says Bishop McAleenan, "but do remember their presence and their deprivation when you speak with your friends or when the topic of migration arises in conversations – as it often does."

CSAN has published an online resource to mark the day: https://www.cbcew.org.uk/csan-resources-world-day-migrants-and-refugees-2026/

FOURTH CENTENARY OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE BASILICA OF ST. PETER IN THE VATICAN

From the 4th to the 16th Centuries the Old St. Peter's Basilica stood on a site to the left of the obelisk today seen in the centre of St. Peter's Square. (The obelisk itself was erected by Emperor Caligula in AD.37 and stood in the centre of the Circus of Nero). The 4th century St. Peter's Basilica was built by the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great.

The current basilica was initially planned in the 15th century by Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455) and Pope Julius II (1503-1513). Construction began on 18th April 1506 following a design by Donato Bramante, Michelangelo (di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni) and Carlo Maderno and was completed on 18th November 1626. The interior was furnished later by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680). Tradition has it that the remains of St. Peter, who was executed in the Circus of Nero, were buried just outside the Circus which would place them now in the Crypt a little to the east and in front of the present High Altar.

The largely completed Basilica was used on Palm Sunday 1615, but it was another eleven years before St. Peter's Basilica was consecrated on the 18th November 1626 in the papacy of Urban VIII (1623-1644)

In the Spotlight

Ministry of Acolyte

St Anne's Church,
Wrexham

Conferring the Ministry
On
Patrick Morton

On Wednesday, 21st October, Bishop Peter conferred the ministry of Acolyte upon Patrick Morton at a special Mass. Patrick's family and parishioners came to celebrate this joyful occasion.

In his sermon, the Bishop said: *'Dear Patrick, you have been chosen for the Ministry of Acolyte and will have a special role in the Church's ministry. The summit and source of the Church's life is the Eucharist, which builds up the Christian community and makes it grow. You are responsible for assisting priests and deacons in their ministry, and, as special ministers, for giving holy communion to the faithful at the liturgy and to the sick. Because you are specially called to this ministry, you should strive to live more fully by the Lord's sacrifice and to be moulded more perfectly in its likeness. You should seek to understand the deep spiritual meaning of what you do so that you may offer yourself daily to God through Jesus Christ. As you perform your ministry, remember that as you share the one bread with your brothers and sisters, you form one body with them. Show sincere love for Christ's Mystical Body, God's holy people, especially the weak and the sick. Be obedient to the commandment which the Lord gave to his apostles at the Last Supper: "Love one another as I also have loved you." '*

In the final year of formation for the permanent diaconate, Patrick is currently a parishioner at the Parish of Wrexham Maelor, comprising the churches of St Anne's Wrexham and Our Lady and the Welsh Martyrs Overton.

Acolyte is the final preparatory ministry conferred on a candidate before ordination as a Deacon, which Patrick is due to receive in June 2027.

Please keep him in your prayers and pray that more young men may discern a vocation to the Priesthood and Diaconate.

Around and About in the Diocese

BISHOP PETER'S ENGAGEMENTS

November

01	10.30am	All Saints	Cathedral
02.	9.00am	All Souls	Cathedral
03.	12 Noon	St Winefride Mass - Expired Foundation Donors	Cathedral
08.	11.00am	Remembrance Sunday Service	
11		Overseas Clergy Meeting	
12	1.00pm	Opening Ceremony	Our Lady's, Bangor
12.	7.00pm	Confirmation	Hawarden
15-19		Bishop's Conference Autumn Plenary	Leeds
21	1.30pm	Youth Day Mass	Colwyn Bay
22	10.00am	Silver Jubilee Sr M. Elonna Ugochukwu DDL	Rhyl
26	11.00am	Deceased Clergy Mass	Cathedral
27.	6.30pm	Induction Fr John Okeme, MSP	Llandudno Junction

Loneliness, The greatest poverty of our age.

The Mission of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society (S.V.P.) is – 'To seek and find those who are forgotten and to tackle poverty in all its forms.'

Loneliness and social isolation are sadly growing in our society and are often described as the 'greatest poverty". This was originally described by Mother Teresa of Calcutta who stated, *"We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless, the poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty."* The essence of our work in S.V.P. is person-to-person contact, and spending time with people is our greatest gift. We call this befriending.

The Bro Menai Conference covers the Bangor, Caernarfon and Menai Bridge area and part of our work for the past many years has been visiting two elderly people and assisting them by doing weekly shopping. Both of these people are in their nineties and in fact one in their hundredth year. For both people we are their main source of contact. Although they strive to maintain independence, due to mobility and age-related issues they spend most of their time confined to their flat, apart from occasional events in the communal lounge of their home. Our weekly visits remind them of their value and dignity and give them hope.

In official messages and Vatican communications, Pope Leo XIV presents a coherent vision of the elderly as central to the life of the Church. He stresses their spiritual value, their need for human closeness, and their ongoing mission within families and communities.

Pope Leo XIV's teaching presents the elderly as bearers of dignity, witnesses of hope, and essential members of the Church community. His consistent message is that they must be remembered, visited, honoured, and supported, reflecting God's unfailing love for every person.

If you wish to know more about the work of SVP or will consider joining us please contact Adam Farries (Bro Menai Conference President) presidentG230211@svp.org.uk or Sue Roberts (Wrexham Central Council) SusanR@svp.org.uk 07715580251

Events and Invitations

LOOKING AHEAD - EVENTS AND INVITATIONS

NOVEMBER

Sun 1st Solemnity of All Saints
Mon 2nd Commemoration of all the Faithful departed.
Sat 7th Dedication of the Cathedral Church of Our Lady of Sorrows
Sun 8th Remembrance Sunday
Sun 15th. World Day of the Poor- 'The Lord is the Refuge of the Poor'
Wed 18th Red Wednesday – ACN awareness raising for those persecuted for their faith
Sun 22nd Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.
Youth Sunday
Sun 29th Advent Sunday

DECEMBER

Thu 3rd Migrants' Day
Tue 8th Immaculate Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary
Sun 13th Third Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete Sunday*)
Fri 25th Nativity of the Lord
Sun 27th. Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph.

2027 JANUARY

Fri 1st Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God.
Sat 2nd Guild of St. Stephen Annual Mass for Altar Servers following the Feast of St. Stephen

Marriage and Faily Life Commission invite you to a FREE

Advent Family Day

Sunday 29th November 2026

Location: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Brackley Ave, Colwyn Bay LL29 7UU

Arrive from 11:30 a.m.

Please, bring a picnic lunch.
Refreshments provided.

All are welcome

to celebrate family and the beginning of Advent

Craft and activities for all ages: make an Advent Wreath for your family and lots more to take home

Concludes with Family Advent Service with Bishop Peter.

Followed by Hot Dogs and Mince Pies

Limited spaces are available.
Booking is essential via QR Code by Sunday 22nd November
If you have any questions or would you like to help on the day please contact: Wioletta Trebska
Marriage and Family Life Worker/Coordinator
mfl@rcdwxm.org.uk or 07542 268728

The homily was quite deep, and seemed interminable to a little boy in the front pew. As he looked around, his eye caught the Sanctuary lamp. Loudly, he asked "Daddy, when the light turns green, can we go?"

As kingfishers catch fire…

"As kingfishers catch fire" is one of Gerard Manley Hopkins' loveliest and most memorable sonnets. Perhaps I was just lucky. I met him in my early teens and found myself studying him for A Level. He meant far more to me than any of the other texts we read. I loved Hamlet but more for individual speeches and exchanges than for any real grasp of what it was all about. Hopkins was different. What he wrote has stuck with me through the decades.

In my twenties I was working in Hong Kong. The city was interesting and full of temptations, but for me nothing compared with the weekend escapes into the New Territories. Sometimes I walked over Lion Rock down into the network of vegetable gardens and such like into Mui-Fah Guk, Plum Flower Valley. Further along the eastern coast of Tolo Gong an uncertain path struggled up alongside a mountain stream. The water poured into pools through craggy boulders. There I sat and watched kingfishers dart across and back, again and again, their momentary blue and silver flashes like otherworldly semaphore. Inevitably Hopkins came back to my mind.

I did not understand Hopkins very clearly back then, but that made little difference to what I felt was the truth of what he said. As when, for example, in the same poem, he says that each mortal thing dwells, spells out itself, 'Crying What I do is me; for that I came'. This idea is expanded in the concluding six lines: the just man – the righteous man – is in God's eyes like Christ, is Christ, because, we might say, everything he does is a grace, an expression of love. The last three lines are these: *'Christ plays in ten thousand places / Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his / To the Father through the features of men's faces'*. In the beauty of movements, faces and eyes we see something of the Father's love for His son. I think we all know what he means, though as modern folk we might be reluctant to say as much.

There is an ancient distinction between the essence of a thing and its existence. We know what a deer is and what to expect, at least in a general kind of way, but the deer I remember was the one I came face to face with in woods in the north-east of Scotland. We looked at each other for a fragmentary moment until she broke explosively into the undergrowth. It was astounding, something wonderful, the shock of reality and existence.

For us humans there is always a tension between our essence and our existence. We struggle like fish landed on the bank not knowing what we should do. Like that comic scene in the 1980s film, Educating Rita, Rita struggles to put into words what it is that she feels her life lacks. She splutters, 'I want .. I want – COLESLAW!' The Christian concept of what we are looks not to coleslaw but to the divine qualities that are at the heart of the mystery that is the Creator. It is an inexhaustible concept, one which finds its existence fully expressed in Jesus. It is this that makes him the anointed Son of God. And encourages us to become all that we might be in becoming, through the sacraments and liturgy of the Church, the children of God.

This brief and deeply imperfect note is meant as an acknowledgement of the welcome I met with at the Prego Day of Prayer & Reflection at St Buenos on the 24 October.

Thank you. *(A parishioner)*

Who do you say that I am?

Last Sunday we heard how the Pharisees tried to test Jesus: '*Teacher, which commandment in the Law is the greatest?'* They test him the way one might test a coin to see if it is the real thing. They want to show him up as just another fallible human being, a counterfeit person, not the Saviour acclaimed by the crowds. That would remove him from circulation, no longer a threat to their idea of themselves. They thought that they had his measure. They were wrong.

And the week before we heard how the Pharisees tested him with a question about the Roman poll-tax. Should we pay it or refuse to pay it? Looking at the image on the silver penny – the exact amount of the tax – he asked them whose image this was. *'Caesar's'*, they said. *'Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's'*. They were amazed and went away in silence.

It was they who were being tested. Jesus's words reminded them that God had made mankind in His image and that therefore they and we should be dedicating our lives to Him with every breath we take. But their actions, and perhaps ours too, showed that they had at some point chosen to turn their backs on God. As Kierkegaard says, *'The greatest hazard of all, losing one's soul, can occur very quietly in the world, as if it were nothing at all.'* We drift into trouble, like people caught in shifting tides. We do not know where we are.

So, when Jesus was asked *'Which is the greatest commandment?'* he answered without hesitation: *'You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.*' This is the *Shema*, the basic assertion of what it means to be a Jew (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). It demands a total commitment to God. But then he added a second equally 'greatest commandment': *'And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*' This is also a quotation from scripture (Leviticus 19:18). The Pharisees were probably struck dumb by this juxtaposition of two assertions. Each was true but that did not make them 'like' each other.

For us today these two statements are a simple assertion of what is required of us as Christians. We have come to regard them as the answer at the back of the book. The bit you should know by heart. We think we've got to the essence of the thing. We can put it in our memory stick and forget it. But Jesus is asking a different question.

Jesus' critics turn away silent and ashamed. They are forced to face the unformulated question, 'Who is this man? Who is he really?' His disciples had struggled with the same question until Jesus asked them directly at Caesarea Philippi: *"Who do you say I am?"* Peter answers, '*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'* The Messiah? This is, from a logical point of view, a strange kind of answer. It is not like saying 'a baker', 'an airline pilot', or 'the man in the street'. It is more a way of indicating that in this man we see and hear the full mystery of our existence, its wonder, its profundity and unbound freedom. His life with the Father is there before us in everything he says and does, in every look and gesture.

(A parishioner)

VENITE AD ME

On Thursday 22nd October the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith released a document entitled ***Venite ad Me: Considerations on the Transmission of the Faith in an Epochal Change*****,** which considers how the Church should focus on evangelising adults as well as catechising children and teenagers.

In this "Two-page Clarion special pull-out supplement", Bp Peter introduces the Vatican News' summary.

The document comprises eight chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. They draw extensively on the teaching of the Popes, particularly Pope Leo XIV and Pope Francis, the Second Vatican Council, and other documents.

The text also clarifies that it is a set of Considerations, rather than a Doctrinal Note. It therefore examines *"a variety of points of view without, however, claiming to settle the matter, which remains open to further analysis and development."*

Thus, Its specific aim is to suggest *"concrete paths for proclaiming the kerygma amid the epochal change we are experiencing."*

The document was approved by Pope Leo XIV on August 21, 2026.

Many Bishops' Conferences made valuable contributions to this work, as did the testimonies, submitted by the Bishops, of people who discovered or rediscovered the Lord Jesus. These accounts appear in the final chapter of the Considerations.

Due to the importance of the subject to us in the Diocese of Wrexham at this time of our review of the role of evangelisation and mission of individuals, parishes and the Diocese, it is opportune to provide the full summary of the document provided by Vatican News:

Bearing witness to a personal encounter with Christ

The document's starting point is Jesus' invitation in Matthew's Gospel: "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest."

As the conclusion explains, the document *"calls the faithful to return to the heart of the heritage of Christian faith. The kerygma is, in fact, its central content*," which *"illuminates all the contents of the depositum fidei, drawing people toward the experience of a personal and communal encounter with the living Christ."*

This appeal also takes account of the fact that, in some parts of the world, the transmission of the faith *"has all but ceased."*

Proclaiming God's love for everyone

The first chapter begins by emphasizing that *"Jesus is indeed the true light that illuminates every person*." It continues: *"This is the good news of the Gospel of the Son—that God is love, forever and for everyone."*

Faith, the document stresses, *"is not transmitted primarily as a body of doctrinal content or religious information,*" but *"as a form of ecclesial life into which the believer is gradually introduced."*

Pastoral ministry for adults as well as children and adolescents

In examining how the faith is handed on, the document highlights that the Church *"grows by attraction,"* how the family is the *"first and most essential place for the transmission of the faith,"* and the importance of cooperation between the Church and the family is in this process.

It acknowledges, however, that the transmission of the faith within families "*has been interrupted in many parts of the world."*

Consequently, *"the handing on of the experience of the Christian faith to new generations no longer occurs, so to speak, 'automatically.'"* It adds, *"Only at this point, as a second stage, does the ecclesial community enter the process of transmitting the faith,"*

The document acknowledges that *"in countries with a long-standing Christian tradition, such a context for the transmission of the faith appears today to have been weakened, since it is increasingly characterised by the presence of 'the baptised whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism,' who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith."*

Faced with this reality, it notes that *"the transmission of the faith today requires, in a particular way, the evangelisation of adults and a move beyond pastoral ministry focused solely on the catechesis of children and adolescents."*

An epochal change

The third chapter focuses on the context: the epochal change we are experiencing.

In *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo XIV expressed the urgency of addressing questions about where humanity is heading and which direction we should choose amid this change.

A characteristic feature, particularly in the West, is the *"crisis in the intergenerational transmission of the Christian faith."*

The document observes that *"ever fewer parents are fulfilling their responsibility to introduce their children to the living light of the Gospel message."*

Moreover, *"It is precisely from such family settings that most of the young men and*

women come who, despite having been part of Catholic parish communities, eventually enter adulthood in a state of substantial religious indifference."

A new culture that confines faith to the private sphere

"The crisis of modernity, which is the hallmark of this epochal change, has thus contributed to the emergence of a new culture that has come into competition with the traditional structures through which the faith has been transmitted," the document notes.

The prevailing tendency of this culture appears to be the exaltation of the *"sovereignty of the self."* This is one of the clearest manifestations of the process of secularisation, which tends to confine faith and the Church to the private and personal sphere.

Challenge is anthropological, not technological

Another sign of this epochal change is the spread of digital technologies. Artificial intelligence not only interferes with information ecosystems but also encroaches on human relationships.

P ope Leo XIV wrote in his message for the 2026 World Communications Day: *"The challenge, therefore, is not technological, but anthropological,"*

As conversions increase, so does the challenge of perseverance

It is true that conversions and people returning to the Church are increasing in some highly secularised parts of the world. Yet *"there is also a parallel difficulty concerning the perseverance of neophytes, who often, shortly after receiving baptism, return to a state of practical indifference."*

The situation described therefore *"calls for a rediscovery of the importance of the community in welcoming and accompanying new members of the faithful."*

Centrality of the *kerygma*

The document therefore stresses the need for *"a profound kerygmatic renewal of catechesis."* This also requires attention to language, which must be characterized by "*an appeal from the heart,*" and to an engaging interpersonal relationship.

Proclamation of the kerygma must *"be capable of presenting the good news of God's love and mercy in such a way that those who receive it can truly understand that it is precisely to them that this love and mercy are directed."*

Community, the Word of God, liturgy, and witness

The fifth chapter centres on the importance of the Christian community in relation to the Word of God, the liturgy, and witness.

The document stresses that *"it is absolutely urgent—especially in countries with a long history of evangelisation—to emphasise the importance of promoting, in every ecclesial community, groups dedicated to listening to, meditating on, sharing, and praying with the Word, with regular times set aside for their meetings, complementing the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist."*

The second consideration concerns the liturgy. *"If the heart of the Christian proclamation is the encounter with God's saving love in Christ, the liturgy constitutes the privileged place in which this mystery is celebrated and communicated sacramentally."*

The third essential aspect is the witness of believers, which has three dimensions: *"the witness of holiness, that of closeness, and that of the preferential option for the poor."*

A fourth observation concerns art and beauty, with particular attention given to music.

Faith and culture

The text also addresses the inculturation of the faith, which *"constitutes a necessary step in its transmission."*

The Church's social doctrine offers a particularly significant example to draw on in developing a reasoned presentation of the faith.

Specific areas of attention

The first specific area of attention involves popular piety, which *"remains an important means of transmitting the faith today."* Both longstanding and more recent forms of pilgrimage are also important, as is the desire to belong to a confraternity.

The document then highlights the role of the homily and discussed volunteer work as an opportunity to draw closer to the life of the Church.

It also stresses the *"need to expand opportunities for women to participate in the leadership of ecclesial processes."*

Conclusions

The Considerations seek to reaffirm that Christ is the true light, and the document urges: *"It is now up to us to pass on this same gift to the men and women of our time"*

They, too, await the *"possibility of kindling their lives from that same source of every grace, the light that shines in the world."*

The document can be read on the Vatican website: Venite ad me. Considerations on the Transmission of the Faith in an Epochal Change (22 October 2026)

LEGACY

Bp Peter reminds us that the month of November, when we pray especially for the Faithful Departed, and we think of the Last Things, is an appropriate time to consider afresh what gift we might leave to the world on our departure from it.

He confirms that these are not morbid thoughts but a realistic and practical consideration of what is inevitable sooner or later. Responsibilities to dependants must first be honoured and fulfilled, but beyond that everything is in one's own gift.

Should you consider a gift to the church, a leaflet explaining how you are best able to make this ultimate gift to the Church is available in your parishes, from Bishop's House or on the Diocese of Wrexham website. Your generosity would not be known until after your death or it can remain anonymous, but you can be assured that your gift will be wisely used in the handing on of the precious gift of faith in the work of the Diocese of Wrexham.

Mass is celebrated during the month of November for the repose of the souls of, and in thanksgiving for, all testators to the Diocese.

Also, if you seek help, there is **WILL AID** a Charity Will Writing Scheme: every November, participating solicitors volunteer their time and waive their fee for writing a basic Will. Instead, they invite clients to make a voluntary donation to Will Aid – they suggest £120 for a single basic Will and £200 for a pair of basic 'mirror' Wills. **Will Aid** is a special partnership between the legal profession and eight of the UK's best-loved charities, including SCIAF (Reg Charity No: SC012302) the Scottish equivalent to CAFOD.

Together they raise vital funds for these wonderful causes, while ensuring that people in the UK are sure of knowing they have a professionally written Will.

Making your Will with a 'Will Aid' solicitor helps ensure that your wishes are met after death while supporting the work of eight of the UK's most beloved charities.

For further information: https://www.willaid.org.uk The website also contains other useful information about making a will.

Set up in 1870 by the Duke of Norfolk, the Catholic Union seeks to speak for Catholics in political circles. It provides a weekly briefing on news and items in the public arena, about which we should all be informed and ready to act.

The weekly briefing is available at info@catholicunion.org.uk

The Thomas More Circle is a means of adding extra financial support, available at: St Thomas More Circle

Time

Time heals what reason cannot. *(Seneca)*

Time is a three-fold present: the present as we experience it, the past as a present memory and the future as a present expectation *(St Augustine of Hippo)*

Time is the deposit each one has in the bank of God, and no-one knows the balance. *(Ralph W. Sockman)*

We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not figures on a dial (*Philip James Bailey)*

What is a 'BASILICA'?

A "type of building based on the Athenian royal portico, large oblong building with double columns and a semicircular porch or apse at the end," from Latin *basilica* "building of a court of justice," from Greek *(stoa) basilike* "royal (portal)." In Athens this was the portico of the *archon basileus*, the official who dispensed justice there. The word is thus from the feminine adjective of *basileus* "king".

In Rome, the style of building used for halls of justice, many of which were subsequently appropriated as churches, and so it became a standard plan for new churches. The word is applied to the seven principal Roman churches founded by Constantine. Since then, the designation given by the pope is applied to other significant Catholic churches throughout the world either as 'major basilica' or 'minor basilica'. https://www.etymonline.com/

RED WEDNESDAY

Red Wednesday this year is on 18th November falling in the middle of Aid to the Church in Need's (ACNUK) week of witness. Its primary purpose as part of the global campaign to shine a light on the persecution, suffering and lack of religious freedom faced by many Christians worldwide. In addition to the many special Masses and events held this day individuals are invited to wear red clothing or symbols to-day. Churches and public buildings that have floodlights are invited to illuminate their properties using red filters. (search on-line for 'Floodlight coloured filters')

Join **#TeamRed** and help turn awareness into action this **#RedWednesday**.

#RedWednesday Toolkit

Access fundraising guides, promotional materials, prayer resources, social media assets and helpful tips to support your #TeamRed journey. **Download your resources here**

Help protect Religious Freedom around the world by **signing the Article 18 Petition**.

Through your support of Aid to the Church in Need you can help persecuted children and their families.

Aid to the Church in Need is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church and a registered charity in England and Wales (1097984)

How will you be seen?

A young man in a self-important position, fell in love with an actress. Intending to marry her, he hired a private detective to make sure there was nothing 'doubtful' in her past. Not knowing either party, the 'private eye' reported: "Miss X has an excellent reputation. Modest and without reproach, her associates are also beyond criticism. The only hint of scandal is that in the recent past she has been seen in the company of a businessman of doubtful reputation"

"Live so that the preacher can tell the truth at your funeral" *(K. Bechstrom)*

Questioning children about the sacraments, the bishop asked "What is matrimony?" A little girl replied "It's where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins".

"Oh, no," said the parish priest. "That's purgatory".

"Leave her", said the bishop. "She may be right. What do you and I know about it?" *(F.H. Drinkwater)*

THE BACK PAGE
A 'gallimaufry of serendipity'

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

On Saturday 23rd October a day of prayer, devotion and reflection was hosted at Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Buckley, for the Visitation of the Pilgrim Statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Relics of Saints Jacinta and Francisco.

The day formed part of the World Apostolate of Fatima-England and Wales (WAF-E&W) pilgrim tour of the Dioceses of England and Wales. More details will follow in next month's CLARION.

Clockwise from above:
The statue is brought into the church in procession: Dcn John Goggin places the crown on the statue; the statue, with relics beside; the assembled clergy, KSC, and personnel.

Saints of November

3rd St Winefride. Patron of the Diocese of Wrexham

6th St Illtud Much is based on legend. He became a monk and founded Llanilltud Fawr (Llanwit Major). Thought to be ordained by St Germanus (Garmon) of Auxerre, who ordained St Patrick. A tradition has him as a Knight of the Holy Grail, or even Galahad!

10th St Leo I the Great (d.461) 96 sermons still exist. Defined the doctrine of the incarnation. Ensured that the Holy See was seen as a major authority. Doctor of the Church in 1754

11th St Martin de Tours (316-397) In Amiens he gave half his cloak to a child, then a vision of Christ in the half cloak. First monastic community in Gaul, one of the great saints. Patron of France, and founder of monasteries before St Benedict.

12th St Josaphat. 1580-1623 Born Poland. Joined St Basil, in the Ukrainian Holy Trinity Order. Canonised in 1867, the first eastern saint to be canonised

14th St Dyfrig c. 545 (also known as Dubricius) He and Deiniol persuaded David to attend the synod of Frefi. Died on Bardsey (Ynys Enlli) 1st Bishop of Llandaff. Crowned King Arthur in Colchester

16th St Margaret of Scotland. 1045-93. Born Hungary, came to the court of Edward the Confessor, fled after Hastings 1066. Married Malcolm of Scotland. Piety, concern for poor, set regulations for lent and Easter. Encouraged arts & crafts Canonised 1250, Patron of Scotland 1673.

17th St Elizabeth of Hungary 1207-31 betrothed at 4, married at 14, with four children, and seen as an ideal couple. Her great charity was famous. After her husband's death in crusade, she devoted herself to caring for the sick. She died at 24; miracles attributed to her. Pope Gregory canonised her in 1235.

23rd St Clement I died c 99. Little known, baptised by St Peter? Pope after Cletus. Exiled to Crimea. He wrote to Colossians, rebuking them for a schism: the first example of Rome intervening authoritatively on matters of the church. Died thrown into the sea with an anchor around his neck.

24th St Andrew Dung-Lac & Companions 1795-1839. Vietnamese priest. Martyred with 116 companions. A humble life, he inspired many, and the faith persisted. Canonised 1988 by Pope John-Paul II

25th. St Catherine of Alexandria died c 310. Born Alexandria? Denounced Maxentius, and 50 pagan scholars were converted by her arguments, Maxentius had them burned. Later, Maxentius' wife, an officer and 200 guards had converted, so he condemned her to death on a spiked wheel. The wheel broke, and she was beheaded. Buried in monastery on Mt Sinai. Her voice was one of those heard by Joan of Arc. Patroness of philosophers, maidens and preachers.

A 'Breaking Wheel' is also known as a 'Catherine Wheel' and is most likely the origin of the firework

If any of these simple pen portraits sparks an interest, more detail can be found in various "Lives of the Saints", or search on-line.

No-one could tell me what my soul might be;
I searched for God and God eluded me;
I sought my brother, and I found all three,
My soul, my God, and all humanity. *(Frank D. Adams)*

Don't listen to friends when the friend inside you says "Do this, it'll be alright" *(after Mahatma Gandhi)*

Mother announced that every Saturday a prize would be awarded for the most obedient. "That's not fair" chorused the children, "Daddy will win every time"

Son: "Do you know, Dad, that I have read that in some parts of Africa, a man doesn't know his wife until he marries her?"
Dad: "Why single out Africa?"

Wrecsam Clarion is published by the Diocese of Wrexham, Bishop's House, Sontley Road, Wrexham, LL13 7EW
Telephone 01978 262 726 Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Bishop or the Diocese.
For further information and contributions please contact the Editor, Mark J. Philpot at clarion@rcdwxm.org.uk

The newsletter is distributed through parish email lists.
To register for your copy individually, please email your request to communications@rcdwxm.org.uk