

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS

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WE ARE
CALLED
TO SHARE
COMPASSION
AND LOVE

THE LAST
WILL BE FIRST
AND FIRST
WILL BE
LAST

20th September ~ 4th October 2026 : "All are equal in God's love"

Dear Friends,

I have been away - first in Liverpool for a meeting with the group of pilgrims joining us on this year's pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi, and, second, I was a guest of the Catholic Men's Society at their annual conference in Crewe - hence my not putting the Community News together last weekend. When I started looking at themes for this fortnight I realised that much has, and is, happening around our world since my last letter - so many issues, especially with 'Artificial Intelligence.'

The main talk for the CMS conference focussed on Artificial Intelligence and Pope Leo's 'Magnifica Humanitas', his first encyclical released in May of this year. Co-incidentally, as I was driving to each event, the radio was reporting on warnings from major AI companies who were saying the pace of AI's development needs to slow down and allow for the safety measures to catch up - one even suggesting the future of humankind is in danger of extinction if safeguards are not put in place very soon. All quite frightening. It seemed only a few months ago we were simply looking at AI's threat to our creativity - with authors, musicians and artists petitioning for guarantees and protection of their copyrights.

I have always been interested in science fiction and as a teenager remember reading avidly books with those themes. The imagination of the authors, whether on the page or as dramatisations and films, may have innocently entertained but they did reinforce in me a wariness and the need for caution when using the new advancements in labour-saving technology that we now generally rely on.

A few weeks ago I was laughing with the BBC's new comedy series 'Ann Droid' about an elderly woman's relationship with her second-hand robot carer. A little later I was marvelling at the agility and human-like versatility of the humanoids at China's *World Humanoid Robot Games* (WHRG), hearing the boast this year that a robot named *Tiangong Ultra* set a new 100-meter record of 8.86 seconds, surpassing *Usain Bolt's* human record of 9.58-second record. However, unlike human runners, once in motion the robots do not know how to stop without the aid of 'crash' buffers at the end of the track. An amusing spectacle but also a lesson that the speed AI is progressing needs human supervision - and will definitely need more than padded buffers (or "intelligent" leaders) to put on the brakes!

One thing that I heard a well known musician say earlier today is that he was not worried about AI threatening his creativity because of the uniqueness of his humanity. Through music composers and performers convey their human feelings and emotions, born of the organic and emotional challenges that only human growth can nurture. As human beings we are described by AI as 'living matter' and living matter is defined as "*organisms and organic material derived from living or recently living beings, characterized by metabolism, growth, reproduction, and cellular organization. It includes plants, animals, fungi, bacteria, and other organisms that perform vital processes such as respiration, nutrient intake, and response to stimuli.*" Human stimuli feeds our feelings of compassion, empathy. .

"Magnificent Humanity", said our Pope Leo in May, and now those who have created this artificial intelligence seem to have woken up to their responsibility and are admitting that we do need to slow down and protect ourselves from those who, in the haste to win this new technological race, are a threat to even their own future. As human beings we connect in a way that machines cannot - their artificial reasoning when protecting survival will be based on logic, whereas our reasoning is based on our feelings and our recognising in each other the divine love that we all share and all are born with. Machines, however clever, cannot feel that love. It is our gift alone - God's gift to humanity - and we all have an equal share.

SUNDAY READINGS REFERENCE

20th September 2026

For a background to all the readings each Sunday see Watermead's *The Lord's Day* newsletter from <https://www.watermead-apostolate.co.uk/the-lords-day>

The bible references for this week are as follows:

25th Sunday of Year A (Prayer Week 1)

1st reading: **Isaiah 55:6-9**

2nd reading: **Philippians 1:20-24,27**

Gospel according to **Matthew 20:1-16**

WEEKDAY READINGS REFERENCE

25th Week of Year

Mon: Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13 Matthew 9:9-13

Tue: Proverbs 21:1-6,10-13 Luke 8:19-21

Wed: Proverbs 30:5-9 Luke 9:1-6

Thu: Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 Luke 9:7-9

Fri: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 Luke 9:18-22

Sat: Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8 Luke 9:43-45

NEXT SUNDAY READINGS REFERENCE

27th September 2026

26th Sunday of Year A (Prayer Week 2)

The bible references are as follows:

1st reading: **Ezekiel 18:25-28**

2nd reading: **Philippians 2:1-11**

Gospel according to **Matthew 21:28-32**

WEEKDAY READINGS REFERENCE

26th Week of Year

Mon: Job 1:6-22 Luke 9:46-50

Tue: Daniel 7:9-10,13-14 John 1:47-51

Wed: Job 9:1-13,14-16 Luke 9:57-62

Thu: Job 19:21-27 Luke 10:1-12

Fri: Exodus 23:20-23 Matthew 18:1-5,10

Sat: Job 42:1-3,5-6,12-17 Luke 10:17-24

Universalis - free resource to obtain the daily readings at mass, Office of Readings and various other resources - click here for England & Wales.

Focus on Saints & Feasts

Monday (21st September)
St Matthew (apostle)

Monday (28th September)
St Wenceslas

Wednesday (23rd September)
St Pio

Tuesday (29th September)
Ss Michael, Gabriel & Raphael (archangels)

Thursday (24th September)
**Our Lady of Walsingham
Our Lady of Ransom**

Wednesday (30th September)
St Jerome

Saturday (26th September)
St Cosmos & St Damian

Thursday (1st October)
St Therese of Lisieux

Friday (2nd October)
The Guardian Angels

"Pathways of life run and they cross,
O Lord, blessing our world with love"

Fr John Daley (from his hymn 'Pathways')

CHURCH & WORLD NEWS

Prime Minister and role of churches A report commissioned by the Prime Minister and championing the "significant yet largely unrecognised role" of churches across England was presented to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society on Tuesday 8th September. The report estimates that the country's 33,000 churches of various denominations regularly supply 250,000 instances of community provision. . . .

Read the full article on the Church Times website . . .

Assisted Suicide Bill defeated Lauren Edwards' assisted suicide Bill has been defeated by 286 votes to 270 in a major victory for opponents of the Bill, settling the issue in England and Wales for a generation after a two-year national debate. The assisted suicide Bill was opposed by the leaders of Labour, the Conservatives, Reform UK and the Liberal Democrats, while not a single Northern Irish MP voted for it

Read the article on the ICN website . . .

Programme for Pope Leo visit to France The programme for Pope Leo XIV's Apostolic Journey to France from 25-28 September has officially been released. The four-day visit will be packed as the Pope will travel to Paris, Saint-Denis, Lourdes, and Metz before returning to Rome. Pope Leo's will be the first official state visit since Pope Benedict XVI visited in September 2008. . . .

See programme on the Vatican news website . . .

US bishops form new task force over AI On September 16th the US Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the task force development amid recent calls from several artificial intelligence leaders for a slowdown in the technology's development, the nation's Catholic bishops are engaging tech leaders and lawmakers to address concerns over AI and online child safety. The bishops have also formed a task force to safeguard human dignity as AI rapidly evolves, echoing Pope Leo XIV's urgent message in his encyclical on AI, 'Magnifica Humanitas'

For the full article see the NCR website . . .

CAFOD welcomes decision to ban imports from Israeli settlements, and the government's renewed commitment to act in support of justice and accountability announced on 8th September. The new policy measures, highlighting the illegality of the occupation and pledging firm action against those who finance or facilitate illegal settlements, mark an encouraging step-change by Andy Burnham's government

Read the report on the Vatican website . . .

Palestinian Christians response - see ICN article . . .

UK Government introduce Repeal Bill to remove the historic religious restrictions which prevents a Roman Catholic or Jewish Prime Minister from carrying out the full constitutional duties of their office. This new legislation will mean Roman Catholic and Jewish Prime Ministers can provide advice on Church of England appointments to the King. The Bill will end archaic restrictions that prevent the Prime Minister exercising the full extent of their constitutional responsibilities.

Read the article on the ICN website

American president claims to champion religious freedom - 81 religious plaintiffs disagree In February of the year, Paula White-Cain, an evangelical Christian pastor who oversees the White House Faith Office, stood before the crowd gathered at the National Prayer Breakfast and declared that her boss, President Donald Trump, is a champion of religious freedom. 24 hours later, lawyers representing Trump's administration were defending themselves from the latest filing in a lawsuit brought by a group of Catholic organizations and leaders, including Mercy Sister, JoAnn Persch, a Catholic nun

Read the story on the NCR website . . .

→ ROME/ASSISI → NOVEMBER 2026

The Liverpool Group now have their pilgrim confirmation packs. The Leicester (Stansted) Group have been sent emails re final payments - please check your spam if not received.

✠ Prayer Box ✠



This week we especially remember in prayer
Sid Wright (RIP)

Sheila, Christine, Pauline, Hannah & Tricky, Helena & Dean, Helen, Pat, Anna, Claire, Patricia, Janet, Jennifer, Ann, Philomena, Sister Lelia, Anna, Oisin, Orla, Kate, Mary, John, Patrick, Catherine, Don, John, Matthew, Paul, Peter, Teresa, Pauline & Christine, Susan, Sylvia, Toni, Winefride, Joy, Sisters of St Joseph of Peace

Kate and Gerry and all Madeleine McCann's family
and for all families of missing children.

All the Children caught up in conflicts around our world
especially in Palestine, Israel, Ukraine, Myanmar, Sudan

Please email your reminders & additional names for prayers
watermead-community@outlook.com

PAX CHRISTI

Pray for the Children in Palestine and Israel

'Behold, Children are a Gift from the Lord.'

Psalms 127:3

The work of **Pax Christi** (the 'Peace of Christ') is based on the gospel and inspired by faith. Their vision is of a world where people can live in peace, without fear of violence in any form. Pax Christi is rooted in Catholic Christianity but is open to all who share its values and work. They have produced a downloadable prayer card inviting people to pray, act and stand in solidarity with the people of the Holy Land

DOWNLOAD IT HERE

DATES FOR DIARY

Local Event

'Retreat Day for the Parishes of Leicester and Leicestershire led by Sr Marie-Kolbe Zamora, OSF, STD
organised by St Mary's, London, and held at St Joseph's, Leicester

Saturday 31st October 2026 10am-3pm

Contact Jackie.williams@dioceseofnottingham.uk

Root and Branch Events

Second of the two Linked Events with Ariane founder of 'Pax Veritas'

8th October 2026 at 8.00 pm. Use link from previous meeting

or see <https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/>

'Being a Leader in Tough Times'

Speaker : Jamie Manson

(Journalist, academic, author, speaker, retreat leader, commentator)

12th November 2026 8.00 pm

See <https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/> for more detail

A Warm Welcome

EVERY FRIDAY 11.30 AM - 1.30 PM

at the Immaculate Conception Church Hall

54 New Street, Oadby LE2 4LJ

All are welcome regardless of age, background or interests, to come and share warmth, company, activities, guest speakers.

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The Rosary

A guide to praying the rosary

(Fr John spoke often about his way of saying this prayer and this is taken from an article he wrote in 1998)

When I was a boy I could not pray the rosary. Within a few Hail Marys my mind was off - cricket, rugby, home, looking forward and looking back. Occasionally I would return to the church and the family and the people around us, and then I would be off again. "Distractions" I heard this called in school and by the priest in church, and I need not worry about them unless they were wilful. They weren't, but there was no joy in them. I should have been praying, and I was merely repeating Hail Marys at Catholic speed - like trying to run at a sprint over a mile.

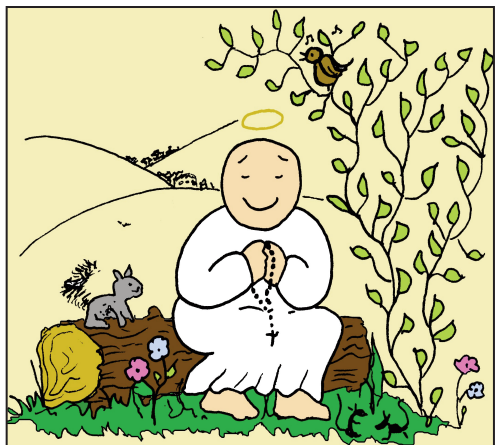
It meant I would never pray the rosary alone. Too difficult. Yet I would say it as part of the devotions in our lovely Catholic parish and hoped the others were praying better than I was.

When I grew up I still could not pray the rosary. I might have been a little better at saying it, but not at praying it. Even as a priest, and knowing the fascinating story of its development to a prayer of the Church, I would stumble distractedly through its lovely meditations, and hope the people were compensating in their warm prayer for the poor offering I was making to Mary.

Yet now I understood rosary as "rose", a lovely flower of many petals, each Hail Mary a petal and each different from the others. I knew the prayer had come from the praying of the Our Father on the Paternoster beads, a pattern of prayer developed from the lovely Book of Psalms in the Old Testament, the basis of prayer for monks and hermits in the Early Church. The people took on that rich pattern and said the Our Father instead of the 150 psalms they could not read, counting the Our Fathers on the Paternoster beads in a union of prayer with the silence and peace of the monasteries. From these patterns came the rose for Mary - 150 petals of prayer, a beautiful flower. I knew the meditations were vivid - Joyful and Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries, a path through the Gospel touching moments of life shared with Jesus, and I wanted to meditate and pray, but distractions spoiled. There was no joy in reciting the rosary.

Then, the gift of a beautiful rosary, threaded by the daughter of Red Indian friends of mine, changed everything

Click here to continue reading . . .



Fr John's Archive Letters

Francis (of Daily Prayers) has an archive of Fr John's letters to the parish, dating back to 2016. If you would like to read them they are free to view - Click here for a direct link

Last word from Fr John

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