ST. JOHN KEMBLE DEANERY

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2026

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

POPE LEO XIV – VATICAN NEWS

The Pope is recovering well from cancer surgery and his trip to South America will go ahead as planned next month, the Vatican has said. Pope Leo had the lower lobe of his right lung removed on 13th October and was diagnosed with adenocarcinoma, the most common form of lung cancer. The Vatican said on Monday that medical tests indicated he's in "good health" and has a "favourable clinical condition".

It comes a few days after doctors revealed his cancer was localised and he won't need more surgery. "Based on his current clinical status, as well as the instrumental and laboratory tests performed, there are no contraindications that would prevent him from undertaking his upcoming apostolic journey," Monday's statement said.



Pope Leo XIV will visit Uruguay and Argentina, as well as Peru - a country where he spent decades as a missionary before he returned to Rome in 2023. The visit begins on 6th November.
Pope Leo has said: *"Thank you for the support of your prayers. Thanks be to God for His generosity. Let us all renew our trust in God's goodness and mercy."*

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY – 100 YEARS

Since Pope Pius XI established World Mission Sunday in 1926, it has grown from a simple appeal to support missionaries through prayer and giving, into a global celebration of the Church's missionary identity.

This year, World Mission Sunday was celebrated on 18th October by all Catholic parishes across the globe. Missio coordinates World Mission Sunday on behalf of the Pope; helping Catholics participate in the Church's worldwide mission and ensuring support reaches those communities that are most in need. In today's Church, this means helping people encounter Christ through the Gospel, the sacraments and local communities. It means providing help that is rooted in peace, dignity and hope, and supports the Church where it is young, or where it is facing great challenges.

The theme this year 'One in Christ, united in mission' reminds us that mission is lived by witnessing to God's love. A united, reconciled Church offers a credible and powerful witness to the Gospel and invites everyone to know Christ.

SOLEMN PROFESSION OF BRO.MEINRAD AND BRO.GILDAS

Brother Meinrad (Meinrad Earley) and Brother Gildas (Gildas Dudonis) made their Solemn Profession as Benedictine monks of Belmont Abbey on 29th September, the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels. The Mass was celebrated by Abbot Brendan.

They professed traditional lifelong Benedictine vows of stability, obedience and conversion of life. Following the service, they entered a three-day silent retreat after having their hoods pinned up, according to ancient monastic tradition.

Both Monks study theology in Rome at Sant'Anselmo, the international Benedictine university and college, to which they returned to shortly after the ceremony.

Brother Meinrad is originally from Liverpool, and Brother Gildas is from Lithuania.





SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

What was the fruit of all those meetings that took place in the Church across the world during the so-called "synod on synodality"? It's not a question many would be able easily to answer, even as our bishops – as Archbishop Mark did this year – invite us to become more synodal and missionary in the culture of our parishes and deaneries.

At least in Herefordshire just over a dozen people can now offer some answers, after getting together on Zoom each Tuesday evening for six weeks to digest together the vision of the 'Final Document' of the synod on synodality. (That document, overwhelmingly approved in October 2024 by delegates of bishops from across the world along with lay people and religious from each continent, is called 'For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission', and can be downloaded from www.synod.va).

Those taking part included people from the Abbey, SFX, Ledbury, and Weobley, as well as some from outside the deanery, including Usk and Abergavenny. Each session was led by a member of the Deanery's Mission Team, and used the two key synodal methods of Lectio Divina and Conversation in the Spirit. Each week, about 14 attended. People were invited to read sections of the Final Document before each session, then focus on one paragraph which people then took into breakout rooms. The atmosphere was prayerful and open-hearted, and everyone agreed that as an experience of communion in the Deanery it was excellent.

One clear fruit was a desire that our parishes begin to use Conversation in the Spirit more, and for this, we need people who have done training in facilitating these groups. (Some have signed up for this at the School for Synodality, which offers free online sessions). As one participant put it: "We should always be

making any decision after careful consideration and prayer, and I can absolutely see that was what the earliest disciples were doing."

Another fruit was realizing a need in our parishes for attentive listening to people who are less likely to show up for events and groups. As one participant puts it, "We must avoid being too 'cosy' meeting up with the same 'like-minded' people all the time." Synodality is a great instrument for opening us to

others – and especially to those who think differently from us. “Internal conversion and building synodality within parishes are needed before outward mission can be effective,” one group concluded.

A third fruit was the discovery that meeting like this to form ourselves as missionary disciples works well, and that “reading groups” can meet over a few weeks to receive Church teaching. There are plans for a “Magnifica Humanitas” reading group early in the New Year to receive Pope Leo’s social teaching on safeguarding humanity in the era of artificial intelligence.



CHURCHES TOGETHER/ECUMENICAL PARISH REPRESENTATIVE

At the last Deanery Pastoral Advisory Council meeting held on 30th September, it was agreed that it would be helpful to have a network of Churches Together/Ecumenical Representatives from each Parish of the Deanery, to support the work of Parish Priests in ecumenical initiatives working through Churches Together.

If you are interested in ecumenism, please consider this invitation to you, to be part of a deanery network of Churches Together/Ecumenical Representatives, whether this is something new to you, or whether you are already involved in this area.

If you would like to know more, please have a chat with your Parish Priest, Parish Pastoral Council Chair or you can also contact me directly, Renata Schmidt: email renata.jmj@outlook.com

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER’S – PILGRIMAGE TO ROME

In October, Fr. John led a very successful pilgrimage to Rome. 25 pilgrims travelled, mostly from SFX, but with a handful of parishioners from Belmont and Leominster too. They all reported Rome as very beautiful and very busy!

BROMYARD FOOD BANK

Bromyard Food Bank has been shortlisted for a Hereford Times Community Award in the Diversity in the Community category. The Food Bank was set up with the support of the Church of England, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches in Bromyard and representatives of all three sit on the Trustee Board. St. Joseph’s has always been a very generous supporter of the work of the Food Bank, which is regularly acknowledged there. Well done and good luck!!!!

EVENTS IN NOVEMBER

What Does Holiness Look Like?

Friday 30th October, 5.30pm – Sunday 1st November, 2.00pm The Chapterhouse, Belmont

The Saints in Christian Art led by Abbot Brendan Thomas OSB

On the Feast of All Saints the Church invites us to lift our eyes to that great multitude of men and women whose lives were transformed by the grace of God. Across the centuries, artists have sought to portray these saints—not simply as heroes of the past, but as living witnesses to the beauty of holiness.

Churches Together in Herefordshire – Open Meeting

Wednesday 4th November @ 7.00pm
St. John's Methodist Church
Peter Spence, Spiritual Support Lead at St. Michael's Hospice will be talking about extending psychospiritual care for those that need support at home in a new partnership with Hereford Cathedral.

Lectio Divina

Thursday 5th November, 7.00pm – 8.00pm
Belmont Parish Centre
Come and join the group as we engage with the Word of God in Scripture. Followed by refreshments. For more information you can contact Renata Schmidt: renata.jmj@outlook.com

A Service of Healing Prayer

Friday 6th November from 6.45pm **Belmont Abbey**
If you, or someone you know, is in need of prayer for physical, spiritual, emotional or mental healing, do come to be strengthened through prayer and intercession. Led by Fr. Michael Clothier OSB of St. Gregory's Community. Vespers is at 5.55pm beforehand if you wish to pray evening prayer with the community. Compline (night prayer) afterwards at 8.00pm.

Harvest Mass

Wednesday 11th November @ 11.00am **St. Joseph's, Bromyard**
All donations will go to Bromyard Food Bank.

Belmont Abbey Christmas Fair

Saturday 14th November, 11.00am – 2.00pm **The Chapterhouse, Belmont**

🎄✨ **With over 30 stalls already booked**, there will be a wonderful selection of local makers, handmade crafts, unique gifts and festive treats – perfect for getting a head start on your Christmas shopping!

☕ Refreshments available, 🎟️ Christmas raffle, 🚗 FREE parking, 🎁 FREE entry.

Come along, enjoy a browse, catch up with friends over a cuppa and support our wonderful local stallholders. All proceeds raised by the parish will go towards **Belmont Abbey Parish Funds**

✨ **Everyone is welcome – we'd love to see you there!** ✨
Please share with friends and family and help us spread the word! 🎄
❤️

Visit the Relics of St. Gerard Majella

Monday 16th November at 7.00pm, Belmont Abbey

- Celebrate the 300th anniversary of St Gerard's birth
- 7.00pm Mass (Preacher: Fr Royston Price CSsR)
- Relics available for prayer from 6.30pm

• Blessings with the relics after Mass

• St Gerard is the Patron Saint of mothers, couples trying to conceive, those looking for work, and making a good confession

• Tea and coffee in The Chapterhouse available after Mass

The Dispersion of the Nations: The geography and archaeology of Genesis

Saturday 21st November, 2.00pm – 4.00pm **Belmont Parish Centre**

Led by David Rohl. The descendants of Noah – Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. Discoveries in Egypt's Eastern Desert. The iconography of Mesopotamian influence in early pharaonic Egypt.

Advent Carol Service

Sunday 29th November @ 3.00pm **St. Joseph's Bromyard**

Following a Churches Together meeting at St. Joseph's, Bromyard, an invitation was extended to all fellow Christians. Everyone is most welcome.

Advent Course on Prayer

Monday 30th November @ 7.30pm **Parish Centre, Belmont**

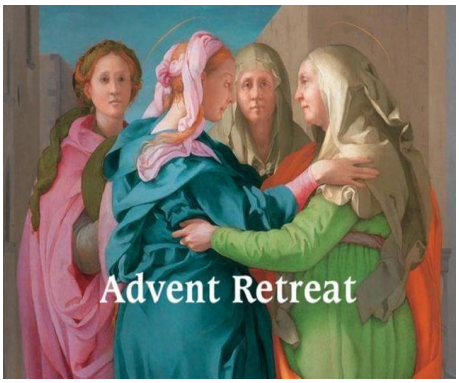
All members of St. John Kemble Deanery and beyond are invited to an Advent Course on Prayer. This will consist of four short talks. The first of these is Prayer in the Benedictine Tradition led by Dom. James Hood OSB. There will be a Question and Answer session after each talk and coffee and biscuits will be served afterwards.

Details of future talks in December can be found under 'Future Events' in this newsletter.

FUTURE EVENTS

The 2026 Advent Retreat: When God Draws Near

Monday 30th November, 4:00pm - Thursday 3rd December, 2:00pm at The Chapterhouse, Belmont



Led by Abbot Brendan Thomas and Dom Alexander Kenyon
Advent is full of encounters: Mary and Gabriel, Mary and Elizabeth, John and Jesus in the womb - in preparation for that Divine Encounter at Christmas. This retreat explores the themes of visitation recognition, and hidden presence. We reflect on how God comes to us—often mediated through others—and how we might become bearers of Christ ourselves. Scripture and image together open a space to recognise the sacred in human encounter as we prepare for Christmas.

Abbot Brendan enjoys sharing the wisdom of the liturgical year through the Scriptures and the great spiritual tradition helping others deepen their faith and prayer.

Fr. Alex is Prior and Novice Master of Belmont Abbey. He is responsible for the formation of those preparing for Benedictine life and enjoys helping others discover how faith takes root in the ordinary

St. Francis Xavier's Advent Fayre

Saturday 5th December from 12.30pm – 2.30pm at St. Francis Xavier's

This is our main fundraising event of the year and on this occasion, will also see the re-opening of the St. John Kemble Hall after all the refurbishment work and new toilets. To mark the occasion Fr. James will be unveiling the new St. John Kemble plaque which has been hand made from oak by Fr. Leo of St. Gregory's community. Everyone is welcome. Please come along.

Christmas Concert – Hereford Male Voice Choir

Saturday 5th December from 7.00pm – 9.00pm at The Chapterhouse, Belmont Abbey

🎄🎶Come and join us for a magical evening of festive music and Christmas cheer as we welcome the wonderful Hereford Police Male Voice Choir to Belmont Abbey! Bring your family and friends and enjoy some beautiful choral singing in the lovely surroundings of The Chapterhouse. A perfect way to get into the Christmas spirit! 🎅✨

🎟️ **Tickets:** Adults £10 | Children under 10 £5

🚗 FREE parking

☕ Refreshments

🎁 Raffle

Tickets are now on sale! Book online here:

👉 https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/christmas-concert-featuring-the-hereford-police-male-voice-choir-tickets-2003475025734

Everyone is welcome, whether you're a regular visitor to Belmont Abbey or joining us for the first time. We look forward to welcoming you, your family and your friends for a wonderful evening of music and festive cheer! 🎄

Advent Course on Prayer

Monday 7th, 14th & 21st December @ 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Belmont

All members of St. John Kemble Deanery and beyond are invited to an Advent Course on Prayer. This will consist of a further three short talks. The details of the next three sessions are listed below. There will be a Question and Answer session after each talk and coffee and biscuits will be served afterwards.

Monday 7th December – Lectio Divina: Holy Reading – Dom Leo Maidlow-Davis OSB
Monday 14th December – Pathways in Prayer – Dom Michael Clothier OSB
Monday 21st December – The Holy Spirit – Abbot Brendan Thomas OSB

Ledbury Carols

Sunday 13th December @ 3.00pm at Most Holy Trinity, Ledbury

The Churches gather for an Ecumenical Advent Carol Service. Bring family and friends.



"Almighty and eternal God, give us the grace and strength to carry out the work entrusted to us in this diocese. Bless our families and our parishes. Open our hearts to the prompting of the Holy Spirit so that, strengthened in faith, growing in hope, and living in charity, we may be missionary disciples making your name known and loved. Guide our Bishop and Clergy and grant us all things necessary for our common life, that we may be of one heart and mind within your holy Church. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen"

PLEASE NOTE

If you wish to advertise anything in the Deanery Newsletter, please ensure it is with your Parish Priest or Chair of your Parish Pastoral Council so that it can be submitted to Tricia Carter (triciacarter2691@gmail.com) by the 20th of the month.