

EXTRA

April 2026



"The sign of the Cross is a kind of synthesis of our faith, for it tells how much God loves us; it tells us that there is a love in this world that is stronger than death, stronger than our weaknesses and sins. The power of love is stronger than the evil which threatens us. It is this mystery of the universality of God's love for men that Mary came to reveal in Lourdes. She invites all people of good will, all those who suffer in heart or body, to raise their eyes towards the Cross of Jesus, so as to discover there the source of life, the source of salvation."

"The Church has received the mission of showing all people this loving face of God, manifested in Jesus Christ. Are we able to understand that, in the Crucified One of Golgotha, our dignity as children of God, tarnished by sin, is restored to us? Let us turn our gaze towards Christ. It is he who will make us free to love as he loves us, and to build a reconciled world. For on this Cross, Jesus took upon himself the weight of all the sufferings and injustices of our humanity. He bore the humiliation and the discrimination; and the torture suffered in many parts of the world by so many of our brothers and sisters for love of Christ. We entrust all this to Mary, mother of Jesus and our mother, present at the foot of the Cross."

Pope Benedict, Homily at Lourdes 2008

HE IS
RISEN!

EXTRA is for articles and information from parishioners and clergy in the churches of our local Cluster: St Charles Borromeo, Hampton-on-the-Hill; St Francis, Kenilworth; St Augustine, Kenilworth; St Peter's, Leamington Spa; Our Lady's, Lillington; St Mary Immaculate, Warwick; and St Joseph's, Whitnash. It is an opportunity to publish longer pieces that cannot fit into the weekly newsletters of each church. Currently produced from St Joseph's in Whitnash, it would be great to bring some new hands on board to ensure it becomes a truly Cluster-wide online publication. **Information for the May edition should be sent to catholicclusterextra@gmail.com by 22 April.**

Sunday after Easter: Divine Mercy Sunday

The Lord revealed to St Faustina, a nun in Krakow in the 1930s, a particular way of praising God for His mercy, revealed to us by the events of Good Friday. Our hope is indeed in the mercy of God for it is He who takes away our sins. Pope St John Paul II instituted the Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. At 3.00 pm at St Peter's the Divine Mercy Devotions will be offered. There will be Exposition and an opportunity for confession.

The Divine Mercy Group

Visit of a relic of St Carlo Acutis

During Lent we had the joy of welcoming a relic of St Carlo to St Joseph's with a well-attended talk by Anna Johnstone who knows St Carlo's family well. His example in using his many gifts and talents for the good of those around him, and others who would later discover his teaching and presentation of aspects of our faith online, have inspired many people of all ages. We were able to look at a substantial part of his Eucharistic Miracles exhibition and to pray before the Blessed Sacrament all day in the church. Thank you, Anna, for coming to visit us! More details at

www.ukmiracles.com

Fr David

St Carlo Acutis: The Freedom of Surrender

The highest moments of beauty do not submit to our authority, rather they require surrender. Artwork is made masterpiece when you stop resistance and consent to its effect. Take music, you only feel it when you stop trying to understand and analyse it, only then can you be moved. We cannot control what is to be encountered and this opposes our sense of autonomy. I understood Carlos to be of intense piety but still held on to scepticism when it came to his sainthood. I reserved a discerning spirit for truth and sought in hopes of finding it (Matt 7:7-8). I was prostrate before the relic and decided to surrender. I thought I was solely releasing control, but more than that, I had surrendered spectating and was now in participation.

I can only describe it as what the Irish call 'thin places' – the veil between divine and ordinary becoming delicate. It's not that God is more present in these moments, rather that we have become more aware. My belief was not born in credulity, but confirmed through hearing a witness of his life, which encouraged me to pray for his intercession. This is what I did the same night through my third relic. I began to understand Carlos in an intimate way. What's ineffable about Carlos is his immediacy in awakening to his role, as though he appreciated his life was not up to him to shape or seize, but to be received, and profoundly orchestrated by God.

As much as I'm allured by Carlo, I'm also being confronted. What I am participating in, is now having its participation in me. Carlo's light accentuates his graces but illuminates my privation of good. I'm sobering to the reality of my ego drama, the attempt to live on my own terms. St. Augustine would express this as, *Incurvatus in se* meaning a life turned inwards, where the self takes centre over God. Carlo stands as inspiration that I must not turn within, but outward – to the transcendent God in surrender to his will. Surrendering to God's will doesn't mean lack of freedom but focused freedom with an end goal.

Bishop Robert Barron pictures a river with banks. The banks are not taking away freedom but instead directing the river with energy and velocity the right way (towards the greater good). If you remove the banks you're left with a lazy lake, it's not going anywhere and, with no intention, it's stagnant. Surrendering my freedom allows God to grant me access to his true freedom that has direction, speed, purpose and a greater good. He uses his Church, Saints and Relics to serve as banks on our spiritual journey. Surrender therefore is not where freedom ends – it is where it is finally found. May the Lord guide and sustain us all.

Jake Monastero

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Diary dates

APRIL 2026

2nd—Maundy Thursday

3rd—Good Friday

4th—Vigil of Easter

5th—Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord

12th—Divine Mercy Sunday: 3.00 pm at St Peter's, Divine Mercy Devotions with Exposition and Confessions

18th—**BINGO NIGHT** St Joseph's

26th—ACTA 'close down' meeting. Selly Park Convent conference centre, 2.00 pm

28th—Coventry Newman Circle monthly, St Thomas More (Margaret Roper Room), Watercall Avenue, Coventry CV3 5DE at 7.30 pm.

MAY 2026

25-30th—Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

Warwick District Foodbank

Thank you for past donations.

Updated urgent needs:

Foodbank: updated urgent needs

Pasta Sauce

Squash (smaller bottles)

Tinned Potatoes

Tinned Rice Pudding

Shaving gel/Razors

Crisps

Instant Mash

Oat/Almond Milk (not Soya)

Clean, strong Carrier Bags are also needed

At St Joseph's, Whitnash, donations can be left in the marked box in the Narthex. Thank you in advance.

Jackie Rabone

HOLY TRIDUUM

MAUNDY THURSDAY 2 April	OUR LADY'S Lillington	MASS	7.00 pm	Watch before the Blessed Sacrament
	ST MARY IMMACULATE Warwick	MASS	7.00 pm	Watching at the Altar of Repose until 10.00 pm
	ST FRANCIS Kenilworth	MASS	7.00 pm	Watching with the Blessed Sacrament in the Side Chapel, until Night Prayer at 9.45 pm
	BLESSED ROBERT GRISSOLD Balsall Common	MASS	7.00 pm	
	ST FRANCIS Baddesley Clinton	MASS	7.00 pm	
	ST JOSEPH'S Whitnash	MASS	8.00 pm	Followed by silent prayer until midnight
GOOD FRIDAY 3 April	ST AUGUSTINE'S Kenilworth		9.30 am 7.00 pm	Childrens' Stations of the Cross (in St Augustine's Sch) Stations of the Cross
	ST MARY IMMACULATE		9.30 am	Office of Readings and Morning Prayer
	ST CHARLES BORROMEEO Hampton-on-the-Hill		9.30 am	Office of Readings and Morning Prayer
	OUR LADY'S		10.00 am 12 noon	Office of Readings and Morning Prayer Children's Stations of the Cross
	ST JOSEPH'S		10.00 am	Stations of the Cross
	ST PETER'S	Liturgy of the Day	3.00 pm	6.00 pm Stations of the Cross
	ST JOSEPH'S	Liturgy of the Day	3.00 pm	6.00 pm Stations of the Cross
	BLESSED ROBERT GRISSOLD	Liturgy of the Day	3.00 pm	
	ST MARY IMMACULATE	Liturgy of the Day	3.00 pm	7.00 pm Stations of the Cross
	ST FRANCIS Kenilworth	Liturgy of the Day	3.00 pm	
	HOLY SATURDAY 4 April	ST MARY IMMACULATE		9.30 an
ST CHARLES BORROMEEO Hampton-on-the-Hill			9.30 am	Office of Readings and Morning Prayer
OUR LADY'S			10.00 am	Office of Readings and Morning Prayer
ST FRANCIS Baddesley Clinton		VIGIL	7.00 pm	
ST FRANCIS Kenilworth		VIGIL	7.30 pm	
ST PETER'S Leamington		VIGIL	8.00 pm	
ST MARY IMMACULATE Warwick		VIGIL	8.00 pm	
ST JOSEPH'S Whitnash		VIGIL	8.30 pm	
SUNDAY 5 April	RESURRECTION OF THE LORD			
	ST AUGUSTINE'S	MASS	8.30 am	
	ST CHARLES BORROMEEO	MASS	9.00 am	
	OUR LADY'S	MASS	9.15 am	
	BLESSED ROBERT GRISSOLD	MASS	9.30 am	
	ST MARY IMMACULATE	MASS	10.00 am	
	ST JOSEPH'S	MASS	10.00 am	
	ST FRANCIS Kenilworth	MASS	10.30 am	
	ST PETER'S	MASS	11.15 am	
	ST JOSEPH'S	MASS	5.30 pm	

RCIA Candidates for initiation

It is a great delight that Catholic Leamington has 15 candidates this year for the sacraments of initiation which take place at the Easter Vigil. We have several catechumens (those to be baptised), and candidates being received into full communion with the Church. They all will also be confirmed and make their first holy communion at this time. There are also three Catholics who will be confirmed along with them. Several of these have written briefly of their journey in faith as they look forward to this important occasion in their walk with God.

Liam:

My journey into faith came purely out of an interest in learning more. Despite being familiar with Biblical stories from school, it wasn't until I heard Jordan Peterson's lecture series that I realized how much depth and layers of meaning these stories really have. After reading more, and attending Church a couple of times, I became convinced that this was the right path forward for me.

Ruth:

As an older convert, it would be very difficult for me to summarise in a few words the long journey that I have taken to arrive at this point of wishing to be received into the Catholic Church. My journey is best summed up by paraphrasing St Augustine – our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God. I'd like to thank all of those who have contributed to making the *Come and See* sessions such a great introduction to the Catholic faith, especially Gareth and Gill. I would recommend the sessions to anyone considering making this journey themselves.

Lisette:

I first went through the door of St Peter's with my husband who is a Catholic but relatively new to the UK and wanted support and company to attend Mass. As I sat in the pew, I looked around and wondered "*What is it that they all know, and I do not?*" I entered without expectation and left having experienced a profound sense of spiritual relief. A gift. No thunderbolts but a quiet voice that spoke in stillness that told me I was precisely where I needed to be. To one who is lost there is no greater invitation than "*Be here*", so I stayed.



Over the following months when I attended Mass, I felt a growing sense that this was something I wanted to be a part of and I did not want to be on the outside looking in anymore. I felt God wanted me to find Him and to share in His gifts. That the path had always been there ready to walk. I am very grateful to Gareth and Gill for running the *Come and See* programme, and to all those who have given their time, support, guidance and encouragement on my journey so far.

Irene:

The Saint chosen to guide me in my journey of faith is Saint Catherine Labouré, DC (May 2, 1806 – December 31, 1876) who was a French member of the Daughters of Charity of

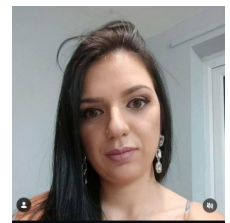
Saint Vincent de Paul and a Marian visionary.

The main reason behind this choice is related to my family connections deeply rooted into the Catholic church. A few members of my family from my mother's side are in fact members of the clergy in Italy. Particularly, two aunts of mine were also members of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. They both passed away a few years ago and they now rest in the grace of God. In my early years, they introduced me to the adoration of the Virgin Mary as Lady of Graces of the Miraculous Medal, to whom they were devoted. And, as of today, I am still strongly devoted to Her.

Saint Catherine Labouré is believed to have relayed the request from the Blessed Virgin Mary to create the Miraculous Medal which is a strong symbol of the Catholic faith and today is worn by millions of people around the world, including myself. I personally visited the chapel in Rue du Bac in Paris, France, where it is believed that the Virgin Mary appeared at least three times to Labouré and where the Saint is now buried. The place is beautiful and rich in history, also crowded with believers.

Veronica:

My faith journey began when I was a child. My grandmother prayed the rosary every day and would call me to sit with her while she prayed. I did not pray, but I would sit beside her listening. Sometimes I also went to Mass with my aunt, who was a catechist. As a teenager, I went to Mass very rarely. When I moved to England, I almost stopped going because I did not understand Mass in English. I still pray some prayers in Portuguese, and it can be difficult to follow everything, but I want my children to grow up with faith.



In 2019 I had breast cancer and had to undergo several surgeries, including a mastectomy. Thanks be to God, I did not need chemotherapy or radiotherapy, and everything is fine today. This experience brought me closer to God, strengthened my faith, and made me want to know Him better. I also began observing Lent more consciously, something I had not done before.

At that time, I started praying a novena to Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and asked for a sign through a yellow rose. A few days later, my mother-in-law sent me a "good morning" image with two yellow roses, which coincided with the ninth day of the novena. Even then I was doubtful and said I would only believe if I saw many roses. One or two days later, without anyone knowing about my request, she sent another image with many yellow roses. No one knew about my request, not my mother-in-law and not anyone else. I felt it was a sign from Saint Thérèse.

After this sign and after asking God for a sign, something remarkable happened during my first Mass after a long time. During that Mass, a man shared that he had been Protestant and became Catholic, explaining the reasons for his conversion. For me, it was God's answer to my doubts. Since then, I have continued learning more about the

Catholic faith by reading, watching videos, and trying to understand the Church better. The more I learn, the more certain I become that the Catholic Church is the path I want to follow.

Leanna:

Although I was originally baptised as an Anglican, as a child I chose to attend St Joseph's with my Nan and Grandad on a Sunday morning and used to feel great comfort in this. And, although I also visited other churches with friends, I always felt more drawn to the Catholic faith. During my secondary school years, I drifted away from practising my faith, although I still found it interesting and even studied Catholicism as part of my Religious Studies GCSE. Despite that interest, it wasn't something I actively lived out at the time.

It was only later in life, after having my little boy, that I really began to reflect and reconnect with my faith in a deeper way. Becoming a parent made me think more seriously about values, purpose, and the kind of foundation I wanted to give him. That led me back to the Catholic faith, not just as something I'd grown up with, but as something meaningful and important in my life now.

Today, my faith gives me a sense of direction, comfort, and purpose. It's something I want to pass on to my son, helping him grow up with a sense of belief, guidance, and belonging. It's no longer just something I was aware of — it's something I actively choose to be part of my life."

Darren:

I was baptised in St Margaret's in Whitnash. As a child I was very aware of God's presence, in fact I'd talk to him all the time especially at night when going to bed. This diminished in teenage and early adult life and the talking to God slowed down then completely stopped. However, like many, I have gone through things – deaths, marriages, births, trials and tribulations – all of which made me ponder our own mortality and place in the universe. The last few years have really led me well back into God's presence, and I could no longer ignore the not-so-subtle coincidences and nudges from God.

Having been back to Anglican churches a few times over the years I knew it was not there, so I researched the Catholic Church, and it sounded a perfect place for me to discover the faith and authentic Christian teachings.

I plucked up the courage to come to St Joseph's, finally attending a Friday morning Mass, and that day has changed my life since. There is a quote from St John Henry Newman that sums it up: "There is not a change so great as that which takes place from the state of doubt and confusion and misery in which the soul was, external to the Catholic Church, to that peace which it found when it came into it."

In summary moving into the Catholic church has felt like coming into port from a storm and the difference the Catholic church and faith is making to my life with the guidance of Father David, Father Stephen and the Come and See sessions has been seismic.

Please pray for all these as we welcome them into the Church, along with Adam, Ben M, Ben P, Cody, Darren,

Leanna, Paul, Ricardo, Samantha and Steve. Do offer them a warm welcome and a word of encouragement! It is proposed, as in previous years, to hold a shared lunch at Pentecost as a further gesture of welcome to them all.

The 'Come and See' (RCIA) sessions, for those seeking to come into the Catholic Church, will resume in October, more details will be publicised nearer the time.

New Parishioners

As we offer Mass for the People of the Parish each week, I often say we are praying for all within our parish whether they know it or not. Most of the new housing in Whitnash parish looks more towards Warwick, because our parish boundary goes all the way to the bottom of Gallows Hill to meet the old Banbury Road. We are trying to leaflet the new houses as they are built, so that the people have a chance of finding our parish and school. Thank you to all who are involved in any kind of outreach in person or online in our parishes. Let us pray for all in our area to come to faith in Christ and his resurrection.

I am suggesting the idea that each month a new Catholic or newcomer to our area introduces themselves and how they are finding life in one of our parishes — who for next month please?

Fr David

History of the Faith in our cluster area

I was looking at the 'orange book', the history of our diocese published in March 2008 with a preface by the late Professor Jack Scarisbrick. It mentions a chapel built by the Franciscans in Saltisford in 1687 but soon afterwards destroyed by a Protestant mob. Also the beginnings of the Wappenbury Mission covering all of our area in a farm building in Catholic hands, and then a church in 1795. To help us all to get to know each other's parishes it would be very good to have a piece about each of our churches in turn, from these early starts to Whitnash, probably being the last to be built in 1971. Please submit articles to Jane at the usual email, catholicclusterextra@gmail.com

Fr David

ACTA (A Call to Action)

ACTA (A Call to Action) was founded in the papacy of Benedict XVI as a movement built from below by clergy and laity alike in every diocese in England and Wales to give those people an effective voice. It was an instrument to establish and promote space for a trusting dialogue within a hierarchically structured people's Church. From the start, ACTA believed that the reforms of the Second Vatican Council were the only way forward for mission to modern society. In its early years, the 200 or so members of the Birmingham branch of ACTA held many stimulating and well-attended meetings and participated in annual National Conferences.

Attendances have declined since Covid, and Pope Francis' launch of Synodality has provided a new instrument which largely replaces and expands on ACTA's aims. Therefore, the steering group of Birmingham ACTA has decided to discontinue its activities as a separate organization and encourage its members to give their full support to the

implementation of synodality in their own parishes. The National Leadership of ACTA will continue encouraging and supporting synodality in dioceses across England and Wales.

To mark the closure of Birmingham ACTA, there will be a final 'close down' meeting on Sunday afternoon, 16 April, offering drinks and refreshments in celebration of the 14 years of its activity. There will also be a presentation of Synodality (or "Walking Together", as Birmingham Archdiocese preferred to call it) and a discussion of what can be done to make it happen locally. Past members of ACTA and any other people interested in Synodality in Birmingham Archdiocese are most welcome to attend. Details are on the accompanying flyer (see page 10).

Coventry Newman Circle

Coventry Newman Circle will hold one of its regular talks on Tuesday 28 April at 7.30pm in the Margaret Roper Room, St Thomas More, Watercall Avenue, Coventry CV3 5DE. The speaker will be Pastor Kai Thierbach on "*Luther and the Priesthood of All Believers*". This will be followed by discussion and refreshments. Any queries to fergus_sp3@yahoo.co.uk



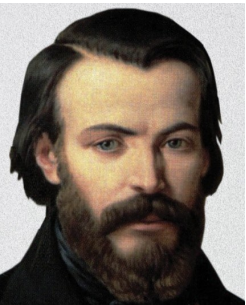
The poster for the Leamington Peace Festival 2026 features a blue background. At the top left, the text "LEAMINGTON PEACE FESTIVAL" is written in large, white, serif capital letters, with "13-14 JUNE 2026" below it. To the right is a circular logo containing a white dove with its wings spread, holding an olive branch. The text "13-14 JUNE 2026" and "LEAMINGTON PEACE FESTIVAL" is also present within the logo. Below the text and logo is a photograph of a band performing on a stage under a white tent. A banner above the stage reads "Leamington Peace Festival". In the foreground, the backs of several audience members' heads are visible. At the bottom of the poster, there is a list of activities: "• Donate", "• Perform", "• Volunteer", "• Apply for trade stall", "• Apply for campaign stall", and "• Follow us:" followed by Facebook and Instagram icons. To the right of the list is a QR code. At the bottom left, the website "leamingtonpeacefestival.org" is written in white lowercase letters.

THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Turning faith into action

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul or the SVP, as it is commonly known, is an international Society, is Catholic in origin and in character, and open to men and women, young and old, of any denomination. The Society has almost a million members in more than 150 countries, organised in local groups, traditionally called Conferences. It has been active in England and Wales since 1844 and currently has 9,000 members.

History



Frederic Ozanam, founder of the SVP

The Society wasn't founded by St Vincent de Paul but actually came about in the Paris of the 1830s where there was a great deal of poverty. This was the period in which Victor Hugo set his story of "Les Miserables" – the wretched ones. At the Sorbonne University, a Catholic student by the name of Frederic Ozanam found himself challenged by some non-Catholic colleagues, who thought that he and his Catholic friends should be

doing more than just talking about the Christian way of life and the social problems of the day. The young students responded by forming a group which met each week, prayed together and pooled what little financial resources they had. This they used to buy food and firewood which they then took to growing numbers of poor families living in Paris at that time.

The students called themselves the St Vincent de Paul Society taking as their inspiration and patron, the priest who had dedicated his life to serving the poor two centuries earlier. St Vincent had spent time setting up soup kitchens and orphanages and, with the help of a group of ladies led by St Louise de Marillac, he founded the Daughters of Charity, an order of sisters which is one of the biggest in the Church today. St Vincent said "Genuine charity is a manifestation of God's love – God loves all men. If we love God, we must love all men". Further he said, "Man has complete dignity when he is seen as God's creation, in complete equality. No one can judge another nor be patronizing." And so, about 200 years later, Frederic Ozanam and his friends decided to follow such an example and act against poverty in all its forms. They believed this would allow them to practice their faith in everyday life and so come closer to God.

Faith in action

Poverty comes in all shapes and forms. Even with our Welfare State and a social security system with social workers and professionals to provide help, there is

still poverty in many forms. This could be loneliness, sickness, depression, physical handicap, learning difficulties, unemployment, homelessness, lone parenthood, bereavement, imprisonment or drug/alcohol addiction.



Housebound, lonely, poorly – all visited by the SVP

The SVP excludes no form of poverty from its concern, and the essence of SVP work (organised into individual 'conferences') is the person-to-person involvement of its members. Visiting and befriending people in need within the local community or Parish builds relationships based on trust and friendship, which give the SVP its unique character.

On a larger scale, the SVP has provided night-shelters, helped set up the Depaul Trust for homeless young people and several Housing Associations, which are now independent but affiliated charities. There are SVP Community shops, furniture and clothing stores and members living near prisons have visited prisoners. Many Conferences help to support other SVP Conferences in developing countries such as India, Sudan, South Sudan and Romania.

Locally, each of the Parishes in Catholic Leamington has a Conference with members visiting people in their home or care homes, the vulnerable, refugees,



SVP Christmas hampers—a joint effort across Catholic Leamington

asylum seekers and single parent families. Sometimes, providing practical assistance when required. In recent years, with the cooperation of our Catholic schools and the generous help of parishioners, we have provided Christmas hampers to families in need. We have also run a strawberry plant project for the children providing plants for them to grow and appreciate.

If you think you might be able to help in whatever way, please contact one of our local representatives:

St Peter's – Peter May – 07890 938806

Our Lady's – Richard Gordon – 07974 455732

St Joseph's – Brian Malone – 07724 845801

Brian Malone

SPAN's Lenten Alms appeal supports House of Light and Hope

Dear brothers and sisters, [from Dr Caracache – House of Light and Hope 14/03/26 from Beirut, Lebanon]

Salam el Masih / The Peace of Christ. Alas! We are again in a state of war.

Humanitarian Crisis in Lebanon Following the Conflict of 2 March 2026



1. General Context

On 2 March 2026, an armed conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted in Lebanon. The fighting quickly intensified, affecting Beirut, the south of the country, and parts of the north the Bekaa region. This escalation of violence has resulted in significant human losses and massive population displacement. According to figures released by the Lebanese government on 10 March 2026, the situation currently includes: ■ **759,300 displaced persons** ■ **570 deaths** ■ **1,444 injured individuals**. The toll continues to rise day by day. This tragedy strikes a country already suffering from a severe economic and social crisis.

2. Government and Humanitarian Response

In response to this dramatic situation, the Lebanese government, with the support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has been making significant efforts to address the humanitarian crisis and meet the urgent needs of displaced populations as well as host families.

According to the government's emergency plan, displaced people have been accommodated in:

■ public schools ■ some campuses of the Lebanese University ■ host families (friends or relatives).

NGOs are providing various forms of assistance depending on their resources. These include: ■ food assistance ■ medicines and medical support ■ distribution of essential relief items.

3. Beit El Nour [House of Light and Hope] Interventions

In this difficult context, Beit El Nour is making every effort, within its available resources, to help alleviate the suffering of affected populations, either directly or through its partner organization Dar Al Amal.

3.1 Education and Child Protection Project – Bourj Hammoud

In the northern suburb of Beirut, in Bourj Hammoud, the education and child protection project remains operational. The center located in Nabaa welcomes children from resident families as well as displaced children living with host families. The services provided include: ■ remedial education classes ■ psychosocial support activities ■ recreational activities. Our team works closely with the coordination committee of local organizations as well as with the Ministry of Social Affairs, in order to avoid duplication of interventions.

3.2 Assistance to Displaced Families in Beirut

Beit El Nour is currently organizing the collection of food and non-food relief items for approximately 540 displaced individuals who have taken shelter in a school in Beirut (Collège Patriarcal), where humanitarian needs remain extremely high.

3.3 Child Protection Project – Sabra

Together with its partners, Beit El Nour is also implementing a project in Sabra, near the Palestinian refugee camp, aimed at supporting children who are exposed to violence and exploitation. The team maintains direct contact with the children and their families, providing remote psychosocial support, which has become one of the most urgent needs during this crisis.

3.4 Child Protection Project – Tripoli

Another project is implemented in Tripoli, targeting children at risk. This program continues to operate as usual and welcomes both school-enrolled and out-of-school children, offering them:

■ educational support ■ prevention activities ■ child protection services and recreational activities



4. Conclusion

The seriousness of the current situation in Lebanon requires the mobilization of all humanitarian actors in order to alleviate the suffering of affected populations. Particular attention must be given to child protection, as children are among the most vulnerable groups during situations of conflict and displacement. In prayer and hope for the innocent ones.
[from SPAN Secretary pauthayden444@gmail.com]

Update on Synod Study Groups

After the first session of the Synod on Synodality ten study groups were set up by Pope Francis on questions arising from the synthesis'; this number was later extended to 15 groups. These study groups feeding back to Pope Leo started to release their final reports in March 2026.

See www.catholicleamington.org.uk/synod for full links.

Final reports have been presented to us by:

Group 3: The mission in the digital environment.

Group 4: The revision of the Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis in a missionary synodal perspective. [i.e. The formation of Priests.]

and the much anticipated report from

Group 5: The participation of women in the life and leadership of the Church.

The main part of this report is a lot more readable than recent Vatican documents.

Paulhayden444@gmail.com



An update on SPAN Catholic Leamington Lenten Appeal 2026

for Local families AND both Friends of the Holy Land in Gaza
and House of Light and Hope in Lebanon.

LOCAL families - £ 2,400 has been distributed to date.

We have obtained supermarket food vouchers to be distributed to local families. Thank you for that support; it is helping 60 families.

We will split further funds raised between two Holy Land charities:

The House of Light and Hope in Lebanon is looking after the needs of young people involved in delinquency and drug addiction; some are homeless, sometimes illiterate, sexually exploited and often victims of poverty and violence. See recent letter from Dr Caracache.

Friends of the Holy Land in Gaza is committed to helping Christians throughout the West Bank, Israel, Gaza and Jordan. Investment in 2025/2026 will be the greatest in the charity's history to date. See the 'News' section on their website <https://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk>

To give: [Please consider Gift Aiding your donation if you pay any income tax. All we need to know is your name, postcode and amount donated].

- via gold envelopes in St Joseph's, St Peter's or Our Lady's Churches, return via collections or boxes
- via bank transfer: account name SPAN, bank code 40-27-06, account number 21324004 or send to Michael Barker: 77 Montrose Avenue, Leamington Spa, CV32 7DS.
Let Michael know if you wish Gift Aid to be added: michaelbarker77@sky.com
- By cheque made out to SPAN. To add Gift Aid contact Michael.
- Or through Justgiving <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/spanlent26>



ACTA - Birmingham Archdiocese

“Celebrating ACTA and Synodality in the Archdiocese of Birmingham”

How to encourage synodality in your parish



All welcome!

Selly Park Convent Conference Centre

B29 7LL

Sunday April 26th 2026

Tea and Coffee from 2pm

Formal beginning at 2.30pm

Celebratory drinks after the meeting

Please let us know that you plan to attend so that we can plan refreshments: actabhm@gmail.com