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Hallam Bridge



ISSUE #
002

A Community called to love one another as Christ loves us.

SAVED IN HOPE: A REFLECTION ON BENEDICT XVI'S ENCYCLICALS



Benedictus XVI

Joseph Ratzinger
19.IV.2005

28.II.2013

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'Holy Family, Stainforth Leads The Way In Hallam

The staff and children of Holy Family Stainforth are truly leading the way in the Diocese of Hallam. In June of this year, the school received a remarkable HMI Inspection Report



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Their New Home



We continue the story of our support for a refugee family...

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Reflections On An Unforgettable Year: 2022

By Cardinal Nichols

in the context of such a difficult year, marked by the death of our beloved Queen, the terrible conflict in the Ukraine, the soaring cost of living and its painful consequences, there is just one focus that I wish to highlight. The burden of suffering and loneliness carried by many, those who are unable to meet the expectations of previous years of plenty and struggling to find new balances between harsh reality and usual comforts.

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the New Year 2023, and to Hallam Bridge, which contains communications by and from the People of God of the Diocese of Hallam and from wider afield. We pray for the repose of the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict, and include an article from James Day reflecting on The Encyclicals of Benedict XVI. There will be much further reflection on the life and legacy of Benedict in the weeks and months to come; we will endeavour to present some of these. If you have personal experience of Benedict and/or his writing, do please write in and tell us your story. If you would like other of your local, parish or group news to be included in a future edition of the Hallam Bridge, do send it in. On other pages, we hear Cardinal Vincent Nichol's reflections on 2022. The continuation on the support and welcoming of a refugee family in hallam, celebrating the ongoing journeys in faith across the diocese, we hear about an outstanding Inspection report, the ongoing successful efforts to Live Simply from St Vincent's Parish, the very successful 60 years of marriage celebrated by Theresa and Philip Finnegan in December and the return of the fabulous UCM Christmas lunch event. Upcoming events to consider joining, individually or with a group, are the on-line training offered by the London Jesuit Centre on "Living with the Spirit of the synod" on January 25, 2023 and another synod formation course run by the Vatican Synod office together with Sophia University. See the Hallam website for more details. Both these courses would better done with a discussion group. Get in touch with the Formation and Mission Team if you would like to join a diocesan group for this or need help with organising your own parish group. Look out for the next edition of the Hallam Bridge on february, and blessings on your days.

Fionnuala Frances

Co-ordinator of Formation and Mission

Upcoming Events

JAN
17

Synodality training course - opening webinar

At a time of Church synodal reform, this course offers a wideranging theological and pastoral formation, aimed at helping the Christian community in the exercise of thinking and acting in communion.

Join the opening webinar this 17th of January from 5 to 7pm.

JAN
23

Centenary of SVP St Mary Magdalene, Maltby

Celebration Mass is on 23rd January at St Mary Magdalene Church, morrell Street, Maltby at 6pm. There will be refreshments afterwards. We really hope you can join us to celebrate 100 years of helping the poor and sharing God's love and friendship with those around us.

FEB
1

Discipleship School 2023

Do you want to draw deeper?, Do you want to step from the crowd into true discipleship?, Do you want to grow in your gifts and serving others?

Sign up for SVMH Discipleship School!

A six-month programme running February-June 2023 for people in aged 18-35. Find out more at stvincentsmissionhub.org

FEB
22

The Big Lent Walk

At a time of Church synodal reform, this course offers a wideranging theological and pastoral formation, aimed at helping the Christian community in the exercise of thinking and acting in communion.

Find out more and sign up online at: walk.cafod.org.uk

GET INVOLVED

Your Feedback

We would like to hear your comments on our first issue.

Please send us an email to: communications@hallam-diocese.com

CONTACT & DETAILS

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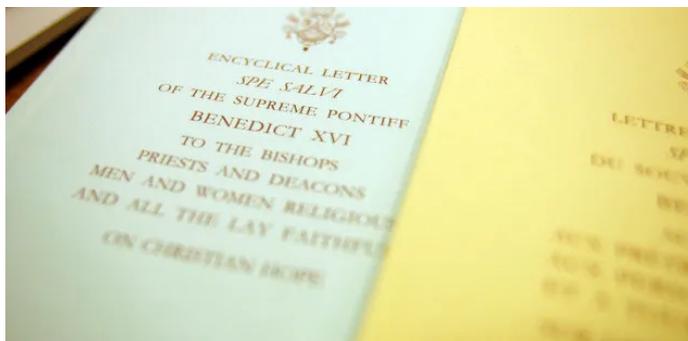
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Saved in Hope: A Reflection on Benedict XVI's Encyclicals



By James Day

James Day's work has appeared in Crisis, Catholic World Report, and Catholic Exchange. He is the author of Father Benedict: The Spiritual and Intellectual Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI (November 2016, Sophia Institute Press).

[...] As adopted sons and daughters of God, we become the Body of Christ. This is what Benedict means when he tells us that faith is not solely a private experience, but demands interrelationships. It also illustrates the essence of eros, philia, and agape: union with the other. "We become 'one body', completely joined in a single existence. Love of God and love of neighbor are now truly united: God incarnate draws us all to himself."

Just as we yearn to share joyful moments and occurrences with another, so too is the intention of the ultimate fulfillment of the Kingdom of God: everlasting union in the light of love that Dante described and that Benedict seeks to reintroduce to us. He dares us to raise our eyes from the ground to the heights of eternal possibility. But it does not come without a price. While on the Cross, Christ reached down into the depths of human existence so as to lift it up. This "descent into hell" leads us to ponder Benedict's next encyclical, *Spe Salvi*, "in hope we were saved" (Rom. 8:24). In *Spe Salvi*, Benedict chose not to lament the passing of the old way of "ghettoized Catholicism" or to cower from secularism's agendas as mere signs of the times, or to dream of a utopian future apart from worldly problems. "Christian faith is not just a look back at what has happened in the past, an anchorage in an origin that lies behind us in

time; nor is it just an outlook on the eternal; it is above all things a looking forward, a reaching-out of hope."

Benedict points out that the concept of hope is not lacking in our time but is misplaced. The result is like Babel, where sin is not overcome but festers and each individual vies for his own idea of hope and his own desires. Hope cannot be properly contemplated without returning to the Cross. To defy death, God in the person of Jesus took on the whole of human suffering. To each person who finds himself alone, suffering, abandoned, desperate, or proud and presumptuous, Jesus says: I am with you, and will raise you up.

One of Joseph Ratzinger's favorite themes, "com-*passion*," which means "to suffer with," is applied here. Citing Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and reflecting on the Passion of Christ, Pope Benedict said: "God is love, and the deeper one's union with God, the more full one is of love. And though God cannot endure pain, he is not without compassion for those who do."

Benedict then leaps beyond the theological into our everyday realities: "The true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and to the sufferer." The reality and lasting significance of faith, hope, and love are meaningful only if they are lived. This message inevitably clashes with the temptation today to dispose of any person across life's spectrum considered unable to contribute to society, irrespective of how such contribution is defined or who defines it—relativism at its finest. "A society unable to accept its suffering members and incapable of helping to share their suffering and to bear it inwardly through 'com-*passion*' is a cruel and inhuman society."

Here in *Spe Salvi*, Benedict makes it clear that our hope must not be individualistic. Rather, our priority must be the dignity and care for the body and soul of each individual. "A world which has to create its own justice is a world without hope." The capacity to accept suffering for the sake of goodness, truth and justice is an essential criterion of humanity, because if my own well-being and safety are ultimately more

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important than truth and justice, then the power of the stronger prevails, then violence and untruth reign supreme.

Benedict introduces the meaning of con-solatio—consolation—as “being with” the other. Con-solatio and com-passion form our life’s purpose, which is to renounce self-love in order to see the essence of others.

Reflections on an unforgettable year: 2022



By Cardinal Nichols

Books will be written chronicling the events of 2022. These simple reflections do not attempt to do that.

Rather, in the context of such a difficult year, marked by the death of our beloved Queen, the terrible conflict in the Ukraine, the soaring cost of living and its painful consequences, there is just one focus that I wish to highlight.

It is, unsurprisingly, the burden of suffering and loneliness carried by many, those who are unable to meet the expectations of previous years of plenty and struggling to find new balances between harsh reality and usual comforts.

Into this picture comes my experience of visiting Palestine in late November and being with the people in the West Bank, principally the Christian communities there.

I came away with a fresh understanding of the limitations with which they live, the great difficulties of holding together their residing love for their homeland and pursuing the futures

they wish, especially for their children. I saw the practical poverties which they have to bear, especially with regard to water supplies and power. Yet, I came away full of admiration for their tenacity, for their perseverance in daily efforts of kindness and solidarity and, above all, for their joyful and vibrant faith as a community.

In this they give us an example to be followed, as well as a charitable cause to be supported. They show us how faith in our Blessed Lord is transforming, for, as St John tells us, 'grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ'(John1.17).

In 2023 may we too deepen our faith and love for our Lord, Jesus, the Christ. Only then will we have the resources to support all who are in need through the difficult times ahead, not begrudgingly, nor with political ideologies urging us on, but simply out of love for Him who never leaves us, never fails us, but is always 'Emmanuel', God with us.

A happy new year to you all.

+Vincent Nichols

Live Simply from St Vincent's Parish



By Catherine Livingston

The Live Simply Award is an exciting opportunity for Catholic communities - parishes, schools, religious orders and chaplaincies - to respond to Pope Francis' invitation in *Laudato Si* “to work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us”. In a nutshell he urges us as Catholics and Christians to face up to our responsibilities as part of Creation and to work together more responsibly

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to help save the planet.

Even before 'Laudato Si' was published in 2015, some of parishioners at St Vincent's in Crookes, Sheffield had already been living out its message in various ways. Although the pandemic closed churches throughout the country, much thought was given to how we could still engage as a community and look after each other. After the church re-opened last summer, an open parish meeting was held and the main question became 'How do we want to rebuild our community?' Several people expressed an interest in continuing and developing 'Live Simply' ideas and so a working group of like-minded parishioners came about.

At our first meeting in November, we decided to check out the CAFOD Live Simply Award to give us more of a focus as a parish. We found out that we needed to register our interest with CAFOD, then form a plan of action under the following headings:

Living Simply, Living Sustainably, Living in Solidarity with others.

What was great to see was that we were already ahead of ourselves with regard to energy use, recycling, and eco-friendly cleaning products. The plan was signed off by Fr Paddy and was accepted by CAFOD. It felt like a real achievement!

Read the full article on The Hallam Bridge website

Their New Home



By Home from Home Hallam

We continue the story of our support for a refugee family...

Our family had been living in a tent, in a refugee camp in Lebanon. Basic needs for food and water would have been met, but with little education for any of their children, or help for their disabled child, life must have been a daily struggle.

You already know how pleased they were with their new home. So how had we secured it for them?

Once our application for a family was accepted, we decided to look for a larger house. South Yorkshire Housing Association were particularly helpful, offering us a 3-bedroomed house, with disabled access, in our favoured area. We jumped at it.

Despite decorators in the throes of a full refurbishment, our first visit showed that this house would be perfect for a family, although carpets would need to be replaced, the house furnished, and the garden tidied.

Our first piece of luck was contacting local supplier Pyramid Carpets who donated and fitted carpets throughout.

Next the furnishing. It was astonishing how many individual items were needed – teaspoons, beds, curtains...but once we had asked our church communities, friends and families, items came flooding in; Shannon and her team at SVP Furniture Project could not have been more helpful. We bought dolls, teddies, a football for the children, and a work team tidied the garden.

Team members examined the tenancy agreement and contacted suppliers for utilities.

The first part of our task – which had seemed overwhelming – was now complete. Blessed to be a part of God's work for our fellow human beings, we also felt moved by the generosity of donors.

JOURNEING TOGETHER

Local Catholics bid farewell to Pope Emeritus Benedict



Roman Catholics from across the Diocese of Hallam have said their own farewell to the late Pope Benedict at a Mass for the repose of his soul in the Cathedral Church of St Marie in Sheffield.

The cathedral was full of people, among them local leaders other faiths including the Dean of Sheffield's Anglican Cathedral, the Rev Canon Abigail Thompson, as the Bishop of Hallam, the Rt Rev Ralph Heskett paid tribute to the Pope Emeritus.

Bishop Ralph said: "I think today we gather here in the Cathedral Church of St Marie, first and foremost to give thanks for a life well-lived.

"At the heart of his ministry for over 70 years was his search for truth. His preaching and his written works are a testimony to this and they guaranteed that he will continue to influence the church in death as he did in life."

Bishop Ralph recalled his own first meeting with Pope Benedict, when he was Bishop of Gibraltar, before taking over as Bishop of Hallam.

"It was a moment I will always remember and treasure," he said.

"Away from the crowds and the grand liturgies of the big occasion, I encountered a more gentle, very human person and - it may come as a surprise to some - a man with a sense of humour."

Diamond Wedding Anniversary of Theresa and Philip Finnigan



Many congratulations to Theresa and Philip Finnigan on their 60th Wedding Anniversary on 29th December 2022.

The day was celebrated with Holy Mass at St. Vincent's Church, Crookes, Sheffield. Fr. Paddy Walsh presented them with a Papal blessing from Pope Francis. They also received a congratulations card from King Charles and Queen Camilla.

This was followed by a party later the same evening for family and friends.

Theresa has been a member of the Union of Catholic Mothers for over 50 years during which time she took the roles of Foundation President, Treasurer and is now Secretary in St. Vincent's Foundation in the Hallam Diocese.

During her very active life as a parishioner, Theresa was a member of the Ladies of Charity and was the school secretary at Notre Dame senior school in Sheffield for 23 years.

We are grateful for her contribution to the UCM and Parish life and wish her and Philip every happiness in their continued life together.

May they receive God's blessings.

JOURNEING TOGETHER

'Holy Family, Stainforth leads the way in Hallam'.



By Joe O'Connor

The staff and children of Holy Family Stainforth are truly leading the way in the Diocese of Hallam. In June of this year, the school received a remarkable HMI Inspection Report which found:

'There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now'.

If this wasn't good enough, more recently In November of this year, Holy Family was awarded outstanding in all areas in their recent Section 48. This is of particular significance as it is one, if not the first school to be inspected under the new, more rigorous, framework for Religious Education in our Catholic Schools. The report stated:

'Holy Family School is providing an outstanding level of Catholic education, and is truly aspirational in its vision. The provision for the Catholic life of the school is rooted in the school's mission, and there exists a high level of consistency in how this is applied across the school. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and live out the message of the mission statement to the full. The Catholic life and mission are outstanding'.

The remarkable achievement is down to the outstanding leadership which has been pivotal in driving the school forward in all areas of

teaching and learning, as well as preparing the children of Stainforth with opportunities for when they leave school. Within Holy Family, pupils and staff live out their mission statement of 'Learning together, playing together, praying together.' The behaviour of all the children is nothing short of exemplary; their polite, courteous and welcoming manner provides a calm and purposeful working atmosphere throughout the school.

The Leadership of the school is steered by the Executive Head, Bernadette Nesbit and the current Head of School, Clair McFadden. Mrs Nesbit is also the Executive Head of St Francis Xavier Balby and St Mary Edlington, which itself underwent an Ofsted Inspection of Good with Outstanding Features and a further Section 48 in the summer of 2022 which was judged Outstanding in all areas. The high expectations for pupils, both academically and socially are pivotal to pupils enjoying their learning and achieving highly.

On a recent visit to the school, Bishop Ralph commented on the exceptional Section 48 Report. He was taken aback by the tangible Catholic Ethos which is lived and breathed by all the pupils. During his visit, he met with children and staff not only to congratulate them but also to see the work on show and to thank everyone for their continued hard work and commitment to the Diocese. Read the full article on the Hallam Bridge Website

Holy Family has enjoyed remarkable success over the years in an area of high deprivation. This success is built upon a vision of high aspirations.

Mrs Nesbit is at the forefront of educational change. Under her stewardship, not only of Holy Family but also St Mary's and St Francis Xavier, she manages to juxtapose continuous CPD for staff, ambitious expectations for children and a curriculum to rival any in the country. Holy Family is a true reflection of this ambition. In the words of Bishop Ralph; 'as a diocese we are proud of the achievements of the school and may it continue to go from strength to strength'.

JOURNEING TOGETHER

Catholics joining Christians from across Sheffield in a citywide month of prayer and mission



Catholics from several parishes - including St Marie's, St Vincent's, Sacred Heart, Mother of God, St Thomas' and the MissionHub - are joining over a thousand Sheffield Christians in a month of prayer and mission this March 2023. Now in its third year, Arise Sheffield invites all believers to spend the month of March covering their local streets in prayer, and discovering prayer needs in their areas.

One parishioner, from St Vincent's in Crookes, said, "Arise is an inspirational project. I believe it has the blessing of God on it and it will have a great impact on our City."

Some Catholics discovered Arise after the start of the synodal journey last year, in which there were questions for reflection about relationships with other local churches.

"Being part of Arise has made me feel more connected with the wider Christian community in Sheffield. As Catholics it sometimes seems like we're a bit detached from our brothers and sisters in other denominations, but with Arise it's been wonderful to be reminded of how much we have in common," said another parishioner, from St Thomas'.

In addition to the month of prayer-walking in March, Arise supports local churches to connect with their local areas during the major Christian feasts, subsidizing evangelistic Easter and Advent gifts, as well as running the Arise:Hallow campaign over All Saints and All Souls, as a positive alternative to Halloween decorations and costumes. Arise also encourages and inspires believers to live their faith more deeply through the *Arise!*

magazine.

To find out more about Arise and how the movement could help you as you journey deeper in prayer and mission this year, visit www.arisesheffield.org and register for updates.

Hallam Annual UCM Lunch on November 2022



After a break of three years, the Hallam UCM Christmas lunch at the end of November 2022 was enjoyed by 50 of its members together with Deacon Peter Marshall the UCM Chaplain, the Diocesan President Mrs. Dorothy Anderson and other Officers past and present.

As in previous years, Christmas stockings were made by the UCM ladies and parishioners of St. Vincent's Foundation in Sheffield. This year £250 was raised to be donated to the Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice fund.

Mrs. Angela Higginson announced that £300 had been raised by members of the Catholic mothers to be donated to 'Mary's Meals.'

Proceeds from the raffle of £226 were given to Miss Susan McDonald, the Director of Youth Ministry in the Hallam Diocese.

The luncheon was most enjoyable and we look forward to our next social meeting.