

In Touch

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
25th /26th October 2025
No. 1444



Dear Parishioners,

I hope that you and your families are all well. I send you all my prayers.

The news of the ceasefire in Gaza which occurred very recently must bring both hope and anxiety to everyone involved, and indeed to everyone of faith who cares about our fellow human beings who are trapped in so much suffering. We think most especially of the small Christian and Catholic community there, and their parish priest, Fr Romanelli. The Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem gave an interview last week concerning the situation and their hopes for the future. We offer here a small extract.

To the question, "How is it possible, in this historical and emotional context, to build hope and fraternity?", Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, said:

First of all, it takes time. We must not confuse hope with a solution to the conflict, which is not mediated. The end of the war is not the beginning of peace, nor is it the end of the conflict. All of these aspects must be kept in mind. Still, it is naturally the first step. Hope, as I always say, is the daughter of faith. If your heart trusts, it can make real the things it believes in. So, we must work first of all on this — with those who still want to engage again — to create this network, both within Gaza and outside it, because we must not separate the two sides of the borders. We must build fraternity. I believe there is a need for new political leadership, but also religious leadership. This is very important, and we have already begun to make contact. We need new faces, new figures who can help rebuild a different narrative, one based on mutual respect. It will take a long time, because the wounds are deep, but we must not give up. Therefore, there is still hope of building lasting peace, even though right now we are only at the first steps. We must first of all believe in it — we must want it. The timeline will be long; we should not fool ourselves into thinking it will come soon. We must also keep in mind the failures of past agreements — the many failures that have deeply undermined trust between the parties. There will be several phases. I think perhaps the next generation will have a freedom that this generation does not have. But the task of this generation is to prepare the next one. So, little by little, we must create the foundations and conditions, with new faces and new leadership, and above all, create environments that gradually foster a culture of respect, which will in turn bring peace.

Please pray constantly that the people of Gaza, with the West Bank and Israel, may enjoy the peace which they so ardently desire.

Do see the full interview: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/patriarch-pizzaballa-a-new-language-and-new-witnesses-for-a-narrative-of-peace/>

I send you all my very best wishes, **Fr Paul**

MASS TIMES at Worth Abbey:

Sundays- 9.30am (family Mass, with choir)
Mondays to Fridays- 5.30 pm
Saturdays: 9am and 5pm (First Mass of Sunday),
Feast Days 5.30pm Days of Obligation, *see website*

Inside this week's In Touch...

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MASS READINGS: (26 October – 02 November)

Sunday, 26 October- 1st Reading – Ecclesiastes 35:12-14,16-18 2nd Reading – 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18 Gospel – Luke 18: 9-14
Mon – Romans 8:12-17; Luke 13:10-17 **Thu** – Romans 8:31b-39; Luke 13:31-35
Tue – Ephesians 2:19-22; Luke 6:12-16 **Fri** – Romans 9:1-5; Luke 14:1-6
Wed – Romans 8:26-30; Luke 13:22-30 **Sat** – 2 Timothy 4:10-17b; Luke 10:1-9
Sunday, 2 November (All Souls Day): 1st Reading – Wisdom 3:1-9 2nd Reading – Romans 6:3-9 Gospel – John 6:37-40

Prayers

Please pray for Mary and Vincent Hughes and their newborn daughter, Cecilia Mary Bernadette. We offer them our congratulations.

Please pray for the sick of our parish: Patricia Horsman, Stella Higham, Jim Tierney, Krysia Smith, Catherine Elia, Patrick Cambridge, Barry Wingrove, Rowena Leaney, Beryl McNulty, Lin Eade, Jelly Labto, Sheila Charman, Hal Clarke, Gillian Maher, Pamela Bagwell, Terry and Susan Scoble, Sue Pearson, John and Sue Rutherford, Demelza Waring, Liz Hicklin, Mike and Jill Carter and Laura Rawlinson. And also please pray for the healing of our Diocese Youth Adviser Lizzie Wakeling.

Please continue praying for the souls of Pope Francis, Fr. Kevin Taggart and parishioner Tony Hicklin, who both died recently. Please pray for the souls of Kathleen Rogers, Moy Steel, Albert Marchant, Hdmayoun Djavadzadeh, Ivor Francis Davies, John Elton, Deidre Sweetman, Caterina Brenninkmeyer, William Toomey, John Bonner, Mabel Grant-Collie, Peter Seamons, Martin MacDonnell, Trevor Botting, Margaret Mary Hull, Ruth Cross, Norman Smith, Catherine Castle (Ladywood), Derek Kirby-Turner, Winefrid Osborne, Kathy Maynard and Will Gardner whose anniversaries are this week. ***Eternal rest grant unto them, oh Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.***

Prayer from a Christian in Gaza City

“Thank you, Lord, for all those who were protected in your church. Oh Lord, at a time like this, we ask You to comfort the hearts of everyone who has lost someone dear to them; may the touch of the Lord strengthen their weakness and support them. And Lord, stand with everyone who has lost their home and compensate them with all that is good.

Lord, let Your peace and security prevail in Israel and across Palestine, and may there be no sounds of death, destruction and evil from now on. Lord, You are the King of peace, let Your peace prevail, and please strengthen our church family who are weak because You are our strength.

You, Lord, are our refuge at all times. Thank You, Lord, for everything. Thank You for answering our prayers, Lord”

St John Paul II Healing Novena

On October 22, we celebrated the feast day of St. John Paul II. You can find the Healing Novena for his intercession in last week’s copy of In Touch.

Worth Parish Community Billboard

Celebrating the Patronal Feast of our Diocese: St Philip Howard of Arundel

On Sunday, 12 October, our parish gathered in joy to celebrate the patronal feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians. Last Sunday, we came together once again—this time for another special occasion: the patronal feast of our diocese, whose patron saint is St Philip Howard.

The Benedictine Community were clothed in their red vestments, and Fr Alex was our priest-president. In his homily, he shared thoughtful reflections on St Philip Howard’s life and witness:

Who was St Philip Howard? Why is he the co-patron of this diocese? What can we learn from his life and example?

Let’s begin by asking what a saint is. In my days of teaching physics, I sometimes placed a prism flat on a mirror by the window of my south-facing monastery room. From sunrise through the morning, as the sun’s beams hit the prism and split the light into all the colours of the rainbow, the mirror would reflect those colours—dancing and weaving around the walls and ceiling. If Jesus is the sunlight streaming through the window, hitting that prism, then each of us who take Jesus Christ as the model of our lives display a different colour of the rainbow—each unique to our own state of life and place in society.

St Paul, in his letters, writes to the saints—meaning all the members of his churches. Over the centuries, the Church began to reserve the term ‘saint’ for certain heroic models of holiness, virtue, and witness. But the Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the universal call to holiness for all of us—especially lay people, especially you—and not only for the ‘professionals’ like me or the gents in red behind me.

Martyrs are a particular kind of saint—witnesses even to the point of death for their faith.

St Philip Howard was born in 1557, the son of the fourth Duke of Norfolk. Strategically married at the age of 14 to his stepsister, Ann, Philip largely ignored his young wife during his years as a courtier in the court of Queen Elizabeth I.

Unknown to him, Ann secretly became a Catholic and was later arrested when the Queen found out, giving birth to their first child while in prison. Independently, Philip too began a journey of conversion and was received into the Catholic Church in 1584 at Arundel Cathedral. His life changed profoundly—centered on daily Mass and regular prayer. Together, Philip and Ann



planned to flee England for the continent without the Queen’s permission—an offence that led to his arrest in 1585 and imprisonment in the Tower of London.

During the Spanish Armada crisis, he was further accused of treason for allegedly offering Masses for Spain’s success. Though found guilty, he was spared execution and remained imprisoned for ten years. The Queen offered him freedom, his titles, and reunion with his family—if only he would attend one Anglican service. But Philip remained steadfast in faith, choosing instead to die in prison in 1595.

On the wall of his cell, he inscribed the words: ‘The more affliction we endure for Christ in this world, the more glory we shall obtain with Christ in the next.’ He also wrote a hymn beginning, ‘No eye has seen what joys the saints obtain. No heart can think in what delight they reign.’

His clear-eyed vision of eternal life, his courage, and his steadfastness in faith remain an example for us all. Like St Philip, let us strive to shine with our own unique light—steadfast in faith, confident in God’s mercy and grace, and trusting that, as Jesus promised, ‘he who endures to the end will be saved.’”

Tapestry of Faith: 60 Years, 60 Faces, One Parish Community

Marking Worth’s 60 years, we’re featuring members whose stories are threads in the rich tapestry of our shared journey. We are still doing an **open call to parishioners who would be happy to also put themselves forward and share their story.** You might not know it yet, but your journey of faith will inspire your fellow parishioners and give glory to God. Please get in touch with us via worthabbeyparish@gmail.com and we’ll send you the list of questions to help us write your testimony.

#44 and #45 Mary and Vincent Hughes

If you’ve ever seen a lively family arrive at Mass with three –no, just recently four—little ones in tow, all somehow smiling and mostly keeping it together, that would likely be Mary and Vincent Hughes.

Mary and Vincent joined our parish in 2023, moving to Sussex “to be closer to Catholic homeschooling families,” and have quickly become a familiar and much-loved presence in our parish community. Their home has just grown even livelier last week with the joyful arrival of their fourth child, Baby Cecilia Mary Bernadette.

Mary grew up in Cheshire, the youngest of six in a family where, as she says, “faith was a cornerstone.” Every summer meant a pilgrimage to Walsingham, and much of her teenage life was spent rowing — including a remarkable 31-mile rowing marathon! The papal visit to the UK in 2010 proved to be a turning point in her faith: “It was the moment I decided that living a life with Jesus was the only option.”

She went on to study maths at Cambridge, where she was deeply involved in the Catholic chaplaincy and first encountered Worth Abbey during a student retreat. After university, she walked the Camino de Santiago with her sister before joining the Wellspring Community in Brighton, where she lived in the Formation and Mission House and helped lead retreats — often returning to Worth. Later, she moved to London to train as a maths teacher. And it was there, at a prayer group, that she met Vincent.

Vincent grew up in South East London as the youngest of five. His youth was filled with rugby matches and music practice — both, as it turns out, excellent training for life in a busy Catholic family. The two married on a snowy December day nearly eight years ago, and in those early years could often be found out cycling, hiking with friends, or hosting legendary dinner parties.

Now parents to Evelyn, Benedict, Samuel, and little Cecilia, the Hugheses continue to bring energy, faith, and generosity to parish life. They lead the parent stream of our Family Faith Formation programme, which last year explored the distinctive treasures of our Catholic faith — from the role of Our Lady and the Saints to the central mystery of the Eucharist. “This year,” they share, “we’re looking forward to diving deep into the Creed and allowing the deposit of faith to continue to be opened up to us.”

Mary and Vincent say they feel “really blessed by the reverence of the liturgy and the music within our parish.” That atmosphere, they note, “makes it easy to draw the children into the gravity and mystery of what we celebrate each Sunday.” Add to that the post-Mass tea, biscuits, and friends to play with, and it becomes — as they put it — “an even greater celebration every Sunday morning.”

As they settle into life as a family of six, the Hughes’s share this hope for all of us: “That every parishioner would be encouraged and supported to grow in their faith and prayer life, and that even more fruit would blossom forth from that.”

So, if you see them at tea after Mass — perhaps with baby Cecilia snuggled in Mary’s arms — do say hello. You’ll likely come away encouraged by their joy, inspired by their faith, and maybe even invited to one of those famous dinner parties one day.

P.S. Kudos to our dear Mary, who found the time to send write up their contribution on her phone, as they drove to see family one weekend, with all kids in tow. That, our dear fellow parishioners, is commitment!



<p>A prayer, saint, or bible verse that inspires you? Mary: <i>The Surrender Novena: Jesus I surrender myself to you, take care of everything</i> Vincent: <i>The Jesus Prayer: Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner</i></p>	<p>What activities do you enjoy? Mary: <i>Sewing and embroidery, very pleased to have just finished a blanket for our incoming baby.</i> Vincent: <i>Shooting</i></p>	<p>What plate of food brings the best memories? Mary: <i>Homemade pizza always brings me joy</i> Vincent: <i>Always up for a barbecue</i></p>
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<p>A cherished memory of being part of this parish? Mary: <i>Attending the Easter Vigil is my annual highlight!</i></p> <p>Vincent: <i>Samuel's baptism</i></p>	<p>What are your hopes and prayers for the future of our parish? Mary: <i>To grow together in holiness, praying for and supporting one another.</i></p> <p>Vincent: <i>I know Benedict would be keen to have brunch every week!</i></p>
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Parish Activities and Announcements

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES...

- 26 October, Sun** – Laudato Si’ 10th Year Anniversary talk by John Paul de Quay “Pilgrims of Hope, Towards a Better World”, at 11am at the Unity Room.
- 29 October, Wed** – Adoration in main Church at 2.30pm
- 2 November, Sun** – Family Adoration at 10.45am
- 9 November, Sun** – Parish Brunch. Everyone—young families, young-at-heart parishioners, new and old parishioners— all absolutely welcome!
- 16 November, Sun** – Family Faith Formation. Everyone welcome!
- 22 & 23 November** – Culmination of Parish 60 Years Celebrations

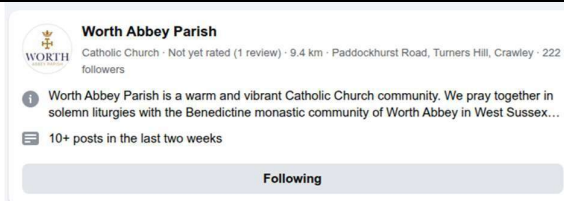
AND OUR REGULAR ACTIVITIES...

- Sacrament of Reconciliation** – Sundays 08.45–09.15am in the church, or by appointment with Fr. Paul.
- Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** – Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm; Sundays 6.30pm after vespers, and every first Sunday of the month, 10:30am (right after Mass)–11am
- Rosary Group** – Mondays 7:10-8pm in the church after vespers. Please contact Rachel Davies: 07801 696354.
- Lectio Divina** – Tuesdays at 8pm via Zoom. Please contact Jenny Chapman jenny_chapman@sky.com. All are welcome!
- Christian Meditation** - Unity Room, 7-8pm, 4th Wednesday of the month: 26 November
- Vigil for Vocations** – Every first Friday of the month at 8.30-9pm, after compline.
- Bible Study Group** – Mondays, 11am at St Benedict’s (Parish Office). Please contact the Parish Office.
- Family Faith Formation** – Monthly, every 3rd Sunday. **New parishioners, all families welcome!**



Worth Intercessory Team (WIT):
Soon, we hope to be starting a new group of prayer warriors. We’ll meet online via Microsoft Teams at 8pm on the first Wednesday of the month (45 min - 1hr), creating a welcoming space to pray together. Would you like to join? Please sign up and we’ll get this prayer group started.
This is a chance to grow in prayer, deepen parish connection, and make a difference— without leaving your home. If you’d like to join please email worthabbeyparish@gmail.com. Come join us. We look forward to praying with you!

“For where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst.” – Mt 18:20



Our parish Facebook page is back! See: <https://www.facebook.com/theworthabbeyparish/>
We invite you to start “following” our page. You’ll find updates, along with content to nourish your broader faith life and inspire you during the week. Because our parish is geographically dispersed in ways many others are not, we know how important it is to be creative in finding ways to stay connected.
This is simply another way for us to keep in touch and grow together in faith. We look forward to connecting with you there!



MASS FOR ALL SOULS

Monday 3rd November, 5:30pm, Abbey Church



**Join us at Worth to commemorate the faithful departed
An opportunity to remember and pray for loved ones who have gone before us**

If you would like your loved ones to be remembered in prayer by the monks of Worth Abbey throughout the month of November, please fill in their details on the back of this card and place it in the box in the Narthex. Alternatively, you can submit their names online at worthabbey.net/allsouls

Requiem Aeternam Dona Eis, Domine

Rt Rev Dom Kevin Taggart, OSB

The funeral mass of Dom Kevin Taggart will take place at Worth Abbey at **1.30pm on Saturday 1st November**, followed by burial in the monastery cemetery.

- 1.00pm: Arrivals
- 1.30pm: Funeral Mass & Burial
- 3.00pm: Refreshments
- 4.00pm: Departures

For catering purposes, please RSVP

For more information please use the following link: [Fr Kevin Taggart Funeral Details | Worth Abbey](#)

*Requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat ei.
Requiescat in pace.
Amen.*

Social Action for Parishioners

Modern Slavery: A Crime that Hides in Plain Sight

Last Saturday, 18 October, was Anti-Slavery Day, an occasion that offers people of all faiths and none an important opportunity to consider and explore what they can do to eliminate modern slavery in their communities. Modern slavery is taking place across our Diocese but is often a 'hidden crime', and can be complex and difficult to identify. As Sussex Police highlight, there is no 'typical' victim, with those subjected to the crime of modern slavery "*men, women and children of all ages, ethnicities, nationalities and backgrounds [including UK citizens] who are forced into [slavery] through the use or threat of violence, deception or coercion.*"

Modern slavery is one of the greatest human tragedies of our time — and yet, it often hides in plain sight. It takes many forms: forced domestic service, human trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation, and crimes that enable these abuses. Behind every statistic is a human story — a life marked by fear, loss of freedom, and profound suffering. Victims are often unseen, hidden away in ordinary places, unable to leave their situation or speak out because of fear, shame, or coercion.

The United Nations International Labour Organisation estimates that the global profit from human trafficking and modern slavery is around £185 billion each year (March 2024), making it the second most profitable criminal enterprise in the world, after the illegal arms trade.

Here in the UK, the Government recorded 19,125 potential victims referred to the Home Office in 2024 — a 13% increase on the previous year. Yet these numbers tell only part of the story, as many cases go unreported. Worldwide, one in four victims is a child. Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, becoming modern-day slaves both abroad and within their own communities. Pope Francis reminded us that: "*Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. We must unite our efforts to free victims and stop this crime that's become ever more aggressive, that threatens not just individuals, but the foundational values of society.*"

Recognising the Signs - Modern slavery is real and it happens all around us — in towns, cities, and rural communities alike.

Some possible indicators include:

- Signs of physical or emotional trauma; looking unkempt or malnourished

- Fearfulness or anxiety, particularly around authorities
- Being withdrawn, neglected, or dependent on another person for movement or communication
- Injuries left untreated, or evidence of control
- Not knowing their home or work address
- Having limited freedom, no days off, or no access to personal documents
- Believing they owe a debt to someone
- Limited social contact or isolation



What We Can Do

The challenge of ending this crime is immense, but our response as Christians begins in awareness, prayer, and compassion. Our Diocese is committed to combatting modern slavery in all its forms and has a Steering Group attached to the Social Action Commission. If you believe someone may be in immediate danger linked to modern slavery, call 999. If you have suspicions but it is not an emergency, call 101 or visit your local police station.

You can also help by becoming an “Abolition Ambassador” in our Diocese — someone who raises awareness, advocates for justice, and helps our communities remain alert to signs of exploitation.

See: [https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/formation/combating-modern-slavery?ct=t\(EMAIL_CAM-PAIGN_2_17_2022_14_56_COPY_06\)&mc_cid=6633e79063&mc_eid=128aab4159](https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/formation/combating-modern-slavery?ct=t(EMAIL_CAM-PAIGN_2_17_2022_14_56_COPY_06)&mc_cid=6633e79063&mc_eid=128aab4159)

And above all, let us pray for all who are enslaved and for those working to set them free — that they may know hope, healing, and the dignity that is theirs as children of God.

*Loving Father,
We seek your divine protection for all who are exploited and enslaved.
For those forced into labour, trafficked into sexual slavery, and denied freedom.
We beseech you to release them from their chains.
Grant them protection, safety, and empowerment.
Restore their dignity and provide them a new beginning.
Show us how we might end exploitation by addressing its causes.
Help us reach out in support of victims and survivors of human trafficking.
Make us instruments of your spirit for their liberation.
For this we pray through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen.*

Other Announcements & Activities

Pope Leo publishes Apostolic Exhortation "Dilexi te", focussing on love for the poor

(Copied from the website of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, original article from the Vatican News)

Pope Leo XIV's first Apostolic Exhortation sees the love of Christ incarnated in love for the poor, in caring for the sick, opposing slavery, defending women who experience exclusion and violence, making education available to all, accompanying migrants, charitable giving, working for equality and more.

Dilexi te ("I have loved you", from Rev 3:9) unfolds in 121 numbered paragraphs spread throughout five chapters, and flows directly from the Gospel of the Son of God, Who in the very act of entering into our world through the Incarnation became poor for our sake. At the same time, it re-proposes the Church's social teaching, especially that of the past 150 years, as "a veritable treasury of significant teachings" concerning the poor. "The poor are at the heart of the Church." - Dilexi te 111

Following in the footsteps of his predecessors

With this document, signed on 4 October, the feast of Saint Francis of Assis, Pope Leo situates himself firmly on the path laid out by his predecessors, including Saint John XXIII, with his appeal, in *Mater et Magistra*, to wealthier countries not to remain indifferent to nations oppressed by hunger and extreme poverty (83).

Saint Paul VI added his own voice with *Populorum progressio* and his appearance at the United Nations as an "advocate of the poor"; as did Saint John Paul II, who consolidated the doctrinal foundations of the Church's "preferential option for the poor".

More recently, Benedict XVI, in *Caritas in veritate*, offered a more markedly political take on the crises of the Third Millennium; while Francis made care for the poor and solidarity with the poor one of the key themes of his pontificate.

Begun by Francis, completed by Pope Leo

Like Francis, who completed the work of Benedict XVI in *Lumen Fidei*, Leo XIV took up the text of his immediate predecessor for his first major Magisterial document. Dilexi te builds on the teaching of Francis' final encyclical – *Dilexit nos*, on the Sacred Heart of Jesus – highlighting the close connection between the love of God and love for the poor. "In the poor", writes Pope Leo, God "continues to speak to us" (5).

The Holy Father likewise recalls the theme of the Church's "preferential option... for the poor", an expression that arose in the context of Latin America (16). Pope Leo explains that this "'preference' never indicates exclusivity or discrimination towards other groups" but instead emphasizes "God's actions, which are moved by compassion toward the poverty and weakness of all humanity" (16).

The 'faces' of poverty

Pope Leo's Exhortation offers numerous points for reflection and calls for action in its analysis of the many "faces of the poor and of poverty", including "the poverty of those who lack material means of subsistence" or "who are socially marginalized and lack the means to give voice to their dignity and abilities" (9).

Pope Leo also notes the existence of moral, spiritual, and cultural poverty; the poverty of "those who have no rights, no space, no freedom" (9).

Inequality and new forms of poverty

Confronted with this reality, Pope Leo says that although "the commitment to the poor and to removing the social and structural causes of poverty has gained importance in recent decades... it remains insufficient" (10).

He warns of the emergence of new, sometimes "more subtle and dangerous" forms of poverty, and decries economic "rules" that increase wealth for a few but also increase inequality (10, 13).

'The dictatorship of an economy that kills'

"The claim that the modern world has reduced poverty is made by measuring poverty with criteria from the past that do not correspond to present-day realities", Pope Leo writes. From this point of view, he welcomes the fact that "the United Nations has made the eradication of poverty one of its Millennium Goals" (13, 10).

However, he says, there is a long way to go, especially in an era in which the "dictatorship of an economy that kills" continues to prevail; the wealth of the few continues to grow "exponentially" while the gap between rich and poor increases; and "ideologies that defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation" remain widespread" (92).

The 'throwaway culture', market freedom, and pastoral care of the elites

All of this, Pope Leo says, indicates the continued existence of a "throwaway culture", sometimes "well disguised", that "tolerates with indifference that millions of people die of hunger or survive in conditions unfit for human beings" (96, 11).

The Pope condemns "pseudo-scientific data" used to support the claim "that a free-market economy will automatically solve the problem of poverty", as well as the idea that "we should opt for pastoral work with the so-called elite, since, rather than wasting time on the poor, it would be better to care for the rich" to gain their assistance in finding real-world solutions for poverty (114).

A change in mentality

Pope Leo thus calls for a "change in mentality" that can free us from "the illusion of happiness derived from a comfortable life that pushes many people towards a vision of life centred on the accumulation of wealth and social success at all costs, even at the expense of others and by taking advantage of unjust social ideals and political-economic systems that favour the strongest" (11).

In every rejected migrant, it is Christ Himself who knocks

Pope Leo also devotes ample space to the theme of migration, illustrating his words with the image of Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy who in 2015 became a symbol of the European migrant crisis with the photo of his lifeless body on a beach. "Unfortunately, apart from some momentary outcry, similar events are becoming increasingly irrelevant and seen as marginal news items", the Pope observes (11).

At the same time, he recalls the Church's centuries-old work in favour of those forced to abandon their lands, seen in refugee reception centres, border missions, and the efforts of Caritas Internationalis and other institutions (75). With regard to migration, the Pope adopts Francis' famous "four verbs": "welcome, protect, promote, and integrate". And he also borrows from his predecessor the description of the poor as "not only objects of our compassion, but teachers of the Gospel" (79).

Women, victims of violence and exclusion

The Holy Father likewise considers the current situation, recalling the countless people who die every day "due to lack of food and water" (12). Similarly, we must not forget those women, the "doubly poor... who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights", he adds, quoting Francis (12).

'The poor are not there by chance'

Pope Leo XIV offers an in-depth reflection on the causes of poverty: "The poor are not there by chance or by blind and cruel fate. Nor, for most of them, is poverty a choice", he says. "Yet, there are those who still presume to make this claim, thus revealing their own blindness and cruelty" (14).

While recognizing that "among the poor there are also those who do not want to work, perhaps because their ancestors, who worked all their lives, died poor", the Pope highlights that there are "so many others — men and women — who nonetheless work from dawn to dusk, perhaps collecting scraps or the like, even though they know that their hard work will only help them to scrape by, but never really improve their lives" (14).

In one of the main points of *Dilexi Te*, Pope Leo insists that it cannot be said "that most of the poor are such because they do not 'deserve' otherwise, as maintained by that specious view of meritocracy that sees only the successful as 'deserving'" (14).

Ideologies and political orientations

Sometimes, Pope Leo observes, Christians themselves allow themselves to succumb to attitudes shaped by "secular ideologies or political and economic approaches that lead to gross generalizations and mistaken conclusions" (15).

Almsgiving often disparaged

A symptom of this mentality is the fact that the exercise of charity is sometimes dismissed or ridiculed "as if [it] were an obsession on the part of a few and not the burning heart of the Church's mission" (15). The Holy Father dwells at length on almsgiving, which in our day is "rarely practiced", and "even at times disparaged" (115).

Indifference on the part of Christians

Along the same lines, the Pope acknowledges that “at times, Christian movements or groups have arisen which show little or no interest in the common good of society and, in particular, the protection and advancement of its most vulnerable and disadvantaged members” (112).

Again quoting Francis, Pope Leo warns that if “any Church community” does not cooperate “in helping the poor to live with dignity and reaching out to everyone”, it will “risk breaking down, however much it may talk about social issues or criticize governments. It will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk” (113).

The witness of saints, blesseds, and religious orders

In contrast to this attitude of indifference, there is a world of saints, blesseds, and missionaries who, over the centuries, have embodied the image of “a poor Church for the poor” (110), from Francis of Assisi and his gesture of embracing a leper (7), to Mother Teresa, a “universal icon of charity” dedicated to the most destitute in India, who accompanied the dying “with the tenderness of prayer” (77).

The Pope also recalls the witness of Saints including Lawrence, Justin, Ambrose, and John Chrysostom; as well as Saint Augustine, who stated: “Anyone who says they love God and has no compassion for the needy is lying”, a reference to 1 John 4:20 (45).

Pope Leo points to the work of the Camillians for the sick (50), and of the women’s congregations in hospitals and nursing homes (51). He notes the welcome given to widows, abandoned children, pilgrims, and beggars in Benedictine monasteries (55); and recalls the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, and Augustinians who initiated “an evangelical revolution” through a “simple and poor lifestyle” (63); as well as the Trinitarians and Mercedarians who, fighting for the liberation of prisoners, expressed the love of “a God who frees not only from spiritual slavery but also from concrete oppression” (60).

The right to education

Looking to the example of Saint Joseph Calasanz, who founded the first free public school in Europe (69), the Pope emphasizes the importance of educating the poor, which “is not a favour but a duty” (72).

The efforts of popular movements

The Pope also mentions the fight against the “destructive effects of the empire of money” (81) by popular movements, led by leaders often “viewed with suspicion and even persecuted” (80). Popular movements, he writes, “invite us to overcome ‘the idea of social policies being a policy for the poor, but never with the poor and never of the poor, much less part of a project which can bring people back together’” (81).

The duty of making our voices heard

In the final pages of the document, Leo XIV reminds every member of the People of God of their duty to “make their voices heard, albeit in different ways, in order to point out and denounce such structural issues, even at the cost of appearing foolish or naïve” (97).

The poor at the heart of the Church

“It is evident”, Pope Leo says “that all of us must ‘let ourselves be evangelized’ by the poor” (102). “No Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem”, he insists; rather “they are part of our ‘family’. They are ‘one of us’”. And so, he says, “our relationship to the poor” cannot “be reduced to merely another ecclesial activity or function” (104).

Our Parish is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable groups within its community. Safe-guarding reps are Charles and Ann McCarthy. Report safeguarding concerns to the Diocese 01293 651148 or via Email: sg1.worth@abdiocese.org.uk

At **In Touch**, we’d love to hear from you—what you’ve enjoyed reading, what you’d like to see more (or even less!) of, and any ideas for improvement. This is our parish community newsletter, and our hope is that it offers both inspiration and a useful service.

If you have any announcements, articles, or activities you would like us to publish in **In Touch** we need you to send them the Friday before the intended publication date please.

Please do get in touch with your **In Touch** team, Hazel Galang-Folli and Lisa Loughlin, at worthabbeyparish@gmail.com

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Cheques to be made payable to Worth Abbey Parish **Online banking payments** -Account 61076892 Sort Code 40-05-20

Safe Spaces: 0300 303 1056 **Web:** www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/ **Email:** safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk

If you’re unable to go to Mass and would like to receive Communion at home, or if you have prayer intentions, pls contact Fr Paul