



Friends

The Newsletter for Friends
of the Lay Community of Saint Benedict

December 2023

Any guest who happens to arrive at the monastery should be received just as we would receive Christ himself, because he promised that on the last day he will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

RB53

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Christmas Greetings to all friends of the Lay Community.

We hope and pray that this will be a special time for you. In our LCSB community prayer we ask "that we may know the joy of your way". We offer this prayer for our friends - that you may know the joy of the incarnation and see the face of Jesus in the celebrations of his birth and in all your family, friends and encounters with others.

We also pray in our community prayer "to be strengthened in the peace we seek for all Creation." The last months have been a time of intense prayer for peace in the Middle East. We have been thinking and praying for all victims of war in Palestine and Israel, and for our members working in the region.

Since the last newsletter, the Synod has met in Rome and concluded its reflections for this year, publishing its summary report on 28 October 2023 entitled "A Synodal Church in Mission". You will find this report on our Synod Watch page lcsb.uk/synod, and the link to an enlightening talk to us by Dr Austen Ivereigh on the Synod.

Please note that the community celebration of the Easter Triduum will take place in Cefn Lea on 28th-31st March and the LCSB Summer Gathering 2024 will be on the August bank holiday weekend again next year - 23rd-26th August 2024. You are very welcome to join us at these events.

With love and prayers from the LCSB and all best wishes for 2024 also.

Adam Simon - Leader of LCSB

Sheila Hollins - President of the Catholic Union



Congratulations to Sheila on her latest appointment. This is a very distinguished role in public life which she will be holding and so let us all keep Sheila in our prayers. It is also the first time in its 150 year history that the Catholic Union has appointed a woman to this role.

This is an extract from the press release.

Baroness Sheila Hollins is the new President of the Catholic Union. The crossbench peer and professional psychiatrist was approved by members of the Catholic Union at their AGM on Tuesday 28 November, at the London Jesuit Centre. She takes up the role with immediate effect.

Baroness Hollins is the first woman to hold the office of President in the Catholic Union's 150-year history. She takes over from Conservative MP, Sir Edward Leigh, who had served as President since 2014.

[Article on Catholic Union website](#)

Valuability - a better way of looking at people with disabilities -featuring Sean Rooney (on Bishop's Conference website)

Sean Rooney appears in a fascinating and motivating podcast published by the Bishops Conference to coincide with International Day of People with Disability. There are some really important messages in this podcast, and you will learn lots about Sean which you never knew. Congratulations Sean for participating in this.



Rachel Davies receives Papal Award



We are delighted to let members know that on 3rd December at Sunday Mass at Worth Abbey, Rachel Davies received a papal award - Bene Merenti - for her services to the Worth Parish.

Rachel received this award after organising for 25 years the Junior Church for the parish, preparing many many young people for the sacramental programmes, as well as serving the parish and the Worth community in many other ways.

She is pictured here with Philippe, who has been a faithful companion to Rachel in this work with young people, and also Howard and Rachel-Emily.

We send our congratulations to Rachel, and we are very proud of her being given this recognition.

Adam



OUR CHRISTMAS CRIB

Our Christmas Crib is kept in a box
in the loft,
wrapped in bubble wrap,
to protect it
from knocks and dust.
It comes out each year,
making me feel warm
and cosy inside.
Is that the same for you?
Do you unwrap each piece
and smile as you do?
Mary, Joseph, the shepherds,
the kings, the donkey,
the manger and
smallest of all,
the baby Jesus.
Comfortable nostalgia,
I guess.
Is that the same for you?
I arrange them all
with care,
starting at the back, until
there's hardly room
for the baby
in the manger.
I have to move
the figures around ,
to make space.
Is that the same for you?
Do you have to make space
in your life,
for the Christ Child
at Christmas?
In the hectic rush of festive cheer
do you really make room?
I'm not sure that I do.
And when Christmas is over
and the busyness subsides,
I pack it all away,
with care,
in the bubble wrap,
in the box,
in the loft
and leave it there.



Is that the same for you?
Do you keep the Christ Child
stored away safely,
out of sight and forgotten
until the following year?
Are you, like me, distracted
by the peaks and troughs of life
as you navigate through?
Is that the same for you?
Occasionally,
when scouring the loft,
I catch sight of the Crib
and think of the baby,
born to bring hope
to a troubled world.
I allow that hope
to give me strength
and welcome the peace
it brings.
I sincerely pray
that's the same for you.

Heather Gallagher

**7 poems for Advent
from Heather on**

lcsb.uk/advent



www.lcsb.uk

An Invitation from the Lay Community of St Benedict

CONVERSATION AS CONVERSION TO THE OTHER



A TALK BY AUSTEN IVEREIGH

How can we be a listening church?

Austen Ivereigh, biographer of Pope Francis and theologian who was present at the Rome synod assembly of October 2023, will share insights on what 'Conversation in the Spirit' can teach a divided Church and fractured humanity.

Thursday 14th December 8pm

[Click here to see a video of Austen's talk - lcsb.uk/synod](https://www.lcsb.uk/synod)

Synod Watch - Click for lcsb.uk/synod



Synod on Synodality october 2023 : resources highlights from Rome

PDF Files

Spiritual Input & Retreat Reflections

1. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *Hoping Against Hope*
2. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *At Home in God*
3. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *Friendship*
4. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *Emmaus*
5. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *Authority*
6. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *The Spirit of Truth*
7. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *The Council of Jerusalem*
8. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *The Seed Germinates*
9. FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, *The Woman at the Well*
10. SR MARIA GRAZIA ANGELINI, *'His Face was Set'*
11. SR MARIA GRAZIA ANGELINI, *Parable of the Two Sons*
12. SR MARIA GRAZIA ANGELINI, *'The least of all'*
13. PROF ANNA ROWLANDS, *Theological Reflection on Communion*
14. FR ORMOND RUSH, *Theological Reflection on Synthesis*

Synod Briefings & Interventions

15. PRESS BRIEFING SUMMARY, *Context of the Letter to the People of God, 25.10.2023*
16. SYNOD BRIEFING DISCUSSION on *Letter to the People of God, 25.10.2023 .pdf*
17. SYNOD BRIEFING: *Ecumenical Exchange with fraternal delegates, 26.10.2023*
18. SYNOD INTERVENTION: *Digital Mission Testimony, Gonzalez & Paguaga 13.10.2023*
19. SYNOD BRIEFING: *'A new way to be Church', 27.10.2023*
20. SYNOD SYNTHESIS REPORT, *A Church that involves everyone... 28.10.2023*

Pope Francis' Contributions

21. POPE FRANCIS' OPENING HOMILY: *Let us walk with the Holy Spirit, 4.10.2023*
22. POPE FRANCIS, *Patristic Texts on the Holy Spirit*
23. SYNOD FINAL SESSION, *Pope Francis: Holy Spirit is the protagonist, 28.10.2023*
24. POPE FRANCIS' CLOSING HOMILY: *The conversation of the Spirit, 29.10.2023*

Synod Documents

25. *Instrumentum Laboris 2023, 'A working tool...'*
26. FROM SYNOD PARTICIPANTS, *Letter to the People of God, 25.10.2023*
27. *Synthesis Report; A Synodal Church on Mission*

*A fuller list of 16th Synod documents
can be found at:*

<https://bit.ly/47IRgKA>



Jerome Beards

Discipleship and Digital Coordinator

Jerome started his new job with the LCSB on 1st October. Here he introduces himself...



My name is Jerome Beards and I'm the new Digital and Discipleship Coordinator for the Lay Community of St Benedict. I first encountered the community through my friend and fellow member Canon David Parmiter, and it was through his introduction to Adam and Barbara Simon that I was lucky enough to experience the Summer Gathering this year, and to experience the love and joy of the community. It has been a pleasure to encounter such a lively and diverse group of people from so many Christian traditions and walks of life, brought together through a mutual love for both the Gospel and the spirituality of St Benedict.

I have been a Catholic all my life but became much more engaged with my faith around the age of seventeen. I have a particular love for the saints and the Church's rich tradition, as well as for particular devotions such as the Rosary, the Sacred Heart and Lectio Divina - which I am delighted to be taking part in as a member of the community!

I studied Psychology with English Literature at St Mary's University, Twickenham before going on to work on the Chaplaincy team at a Catholic secondary school for two years. I am currently studying a Masters in Jungian and Post-Jungian Studies at the University of Essex. In my own time, I enjoy reading as well as playing guitar and singing - which I also hope to bring into the community in the form of praise and worship.

As Digital and Discipleship Coordinator, I will primarily be focused on the young adults groups and teens groups within the community, but will also be looking after social media and organising some retreats, a podcast and much more. I'm really looking forward to working with this community and seeing how we can grow together in our love for Jesus Christ and our love of St Benedict!

CARING FOR CREATION

United Nations Climate Conference (COP 28)

COP28 is the annual Conference of the Parties where world leaders meet to discuss, report and decide on global progress to reduce carbon emissions. This year it has taken place in the United Arab Emirates from 30th November to 12th December.

Some background: In 2015, at COP21, governments signed the Paris Agreement to commit to taking action to reduce carbon emissions and keep global temperature increases to below 1.5C. At the time, the UK was leading the way in setting annual carbon budgets and developing policies to enable the UK to meet those targets. However, the UK has recently rowed back on some of those commitments and has not delivered on its promise to pay into the Loss and Damage Fund.

We are running out of time for the action needed to limit warming to below 1.5C. At COP28, scientists will present the most recent climate science to decision makers. World leaders will also be discussing the Loss and Damage fund. Industrialised countries have a climate debt to pay to developed countries as we have benefitted from burning fossil fuels. Those who have contributed the least to climate change are feeling the impacts of climate change the most. The UK must pay into the Loss and Damage Fund. Christian Aid have presented some options for redirecting finance to enable to UK to deliver on this promise, including Make the Polluters Pay proposals.

Please pray for the success of COP 28.

You can find Christian Aid prayer and other resources at

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/campaign-climate-justice>.

Please also write to your MP, and ask him or her to publicly call on our government to do four things:

1. Deliver the UK's existing pledges on international climate finance, predominantly through grants and without further depleting the aid budget.
2. Pay into the new Loss and Damage Fund agreed at COP27.
3. Make the UK's big polluting companies, including fossil fuel companies, pay in order to fund the UK's Loss and Damage contributions.
4. End all new UK fossil fuel projects and invest in renewable, efficient energy instead.

Thank you!

Peter Stott



LCSB EASTER 2024: 28th - 31st March

Come and join The Lay Community of St Benedict for Easter at Cefn Lea Christian Centre, Dolfor, Newtown, Powys SY16 4AJ, from Thursday 28th - Sunday 31st March

Residential costs:

Adult (standard rate) £220

Adult (subsidy rate) £60

Children (8-17) £60

Children (0-7) free

Non-residential costs:

Day visitor (whole weekend) £120

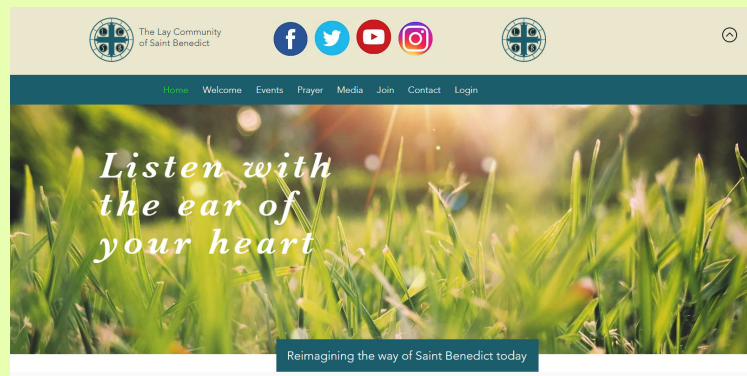
Day visitor (child age 8-17) £30

Online only:

Full weekend free

Details and booking in January

Visit
lcsb.uk



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Please send future items for Friends to:
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www.lcsb.uk

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