

Cathedral Deanery Newsletter

Advent 2021



My dear friends across the Cathedral Deanery,

Advent is here once again, this great season in which we enter into a time of longing, a shared waiting for the coming of The Saviour. In these weeks we become a people who wait. But there is more to Advent than this. Advent is a season when we have work to do, as well as waiting. Every year I return to the prison diaries of Fr Alfred Delp. He passed the Advent of 1944 in a Nazi prison, waiting for a trial (or sorts) and the inevitable execution (which came on February 2nd 1945). His prison musings on Advent are so poignant.

'Advent is the time for rousing. Humanity is shaken to the very depths, so that we may wake up to the truth of ourselves. The primary condition for a fruitful and rewarding Advent is renunciation, surrender. Humans must let go of all their mistaken dreams, their conceited poses and arrogant gestures, all the pretences with which they hope to deceive themselves and others.'

As well as waiting together, perhaps in this Advent we could look honestly at the mistaken dreams that mislead us, pass by the prison cell that became Fr Delp's Christmas crib, and emerge changed. Almost the last words he wrote were:

'If through one person's life there is a little more love and kindness, a little more light and truth in the world, then he will not have lived in vain.'

If we are roused to make that idea real, what an Advent it will be. I hope that this Newsletter will help you to enter joyfully into this Holy Season, and that we may all then enjoy a wonder-filled Christmas

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Deanery Confirmation



On 31 October, the Feast of All Saints, in Arundel Cathedral, Bishop Richard confirmed 37 young people from our Deanery. In his homily, Bishop Richard recalled his first lecture in the seminary, which his Liturgy professor began with a line that has stayed with him ever since:

(continued)

‘Gentleman, you have come here to be made saints.’

Bishop Richard told the candidates, and the whole congregation: ‘That's true of each and every one of us. Every one of us is called by Christ. Every one of us who is a part of the family of his church, the whole purpose of our life is to be a saint.

‘[Today’s Gospel reading, the] Beatitudes is a kind of route map. Really? If you say to yourself, “How do I do this thing of being a follower of Christ? How do I become the saint I'm called to be?”

‘You do what it says there:

You strive for peace for justice.

You are kind and gentle to others.

You don't put all your trust in the things of the world and riches:
your mind and your heart are fixed on Christ.

‘Sometimes we're going to have difficult times as Christians. We hear about that in that Gospel, too: that's our route map.’

Creation of the Parish of Our Lady and the Saints of Sussex

On 1 November Bishop Richard established a new parish in our deanery, covering the territory formerly comprising the parishes of Chichester with Bosham, Selsey, and the Witterings. He has given this new parish the title ‘Parish of Our Lady and the Saints of Sussex.’

A consultation had taken place in all the churches, asking what name and patron parishioners would like to suggest, and many people participated. Among the names nominated, the most frequently named were very clearly Our Lady (under many titles), followed by St Richard, but several other local saints were suggested too: St Wilfrid, St Cuthman and other local martyrs among them.

When the new name was announced, the Moderator of the new parish, Canon Tom Treherne, reminded everyone that the title of a parish is very significant because it tells us about the parish, about its priorities and about what unites it. In naming the parish, it was clear that Bishop Richard had taken on board the local devotion both to Our Lady and to those who lived in this area before us. And Canon Tom reminded congregations that whether or not they were born in Sussex, they all now had a claim on the companionship and the intercession of the many saints of Sussex, who will be waiting for the parish community to invoke them and to turn to them for their assistance.

Canon Tom, Fr Maksym Krat and Fr Sebastian Paul will share responsibility for the pastoral care of this new parish for the next few months. After Fr Maksym moves to pastures new in the Spring, all four churches in the parish will be under the care of Canon Tom and Fr Sebastian. Although the parishes have now been merged canonically, the full process of bringing together the communities is going to take many months, as the strengths of each are combined, administrative structures are brought together and a new, united community is formed.



Advent Reconciliation Opportunities in the Cathedral Deanery

- Arundel Sunday 5th Dec 4pm Service
- Petworth Saturday 11th 12pm Holy Hour & Confessions
- Storrington Sunday 12th 4pm Service
- Bognor Tuesday 14th 7.30pm Service
- Midhurst Saturday 18th 10am Holy Hour & Confessions
- Chichester Tuesday 21st 7pm Service



If it is a while since you last went to Confession and you are at all hesitant, the book review on page 4 may be of interest.

For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission

A two-year 'synodal' process is taking place across the Catholic Church. This is an important moment in the life of the world Church, with Pope Francis calling us all to reflect on the theme 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission.' The Pope is inviting us to take this journey together. As the Preparatory Document for the Synod expresses, 'This path of walking together is the most effective way of manifesting and putting into practice the nature of the Church as the pilgrim and missionary People of God.'



The Synodal process will take place in three stages, beginning in our Diocese in December 2021. The Synod is an invitation to people across our community of faith to 'walk together', with every member of the Church encouraged to participate.

People from across our community are invited to consider and respond to the Synod's questions in a range of ways: online or in writing, within their parish, at home with friends, their family or alone, through in-person or online groups.

The Synod questions include:

- Which people or groups are on the edges of our community?
- How do we welcome people?'
- What is the communication like in our group/parish/diocese?
- Do our celebrations in Church inspire a deeper encounter with the risen Lord?
- What formation do I need to be more committed to the mission of the Church?
- What impact is our local community making in the area – do we make a difference?
- How do we understand dialogue (respectful conversation) between Church and wider Society?
- Is the local community effective in catechising and passing on the faith?
- What tools are necessary for the Church to be truly synodal, listening and journeying together?

More information on the Synod process in our diocese is available at: abdiocese.org.uk/synod. The Cathedral is hosting Zoom group meetings for our deanery from 7.30-9pm on:

- Sunday, 5 December Session 1: Communion
- Thursday, 9 December Session 2: Participation
- Monday, 13 December Session 3: Mission

You can sign up via this form: mailchi.mp/3b9805bda649/ri6falqnyz, or by emailing edward.hopkins@abdiocese.org.uk.

Book Review: *7 Secrets of Confession* by Vinnie Flynn

By Mike Beal, parishioner from Our Lady of Mount Carmel & St Wilfrid, Selsey

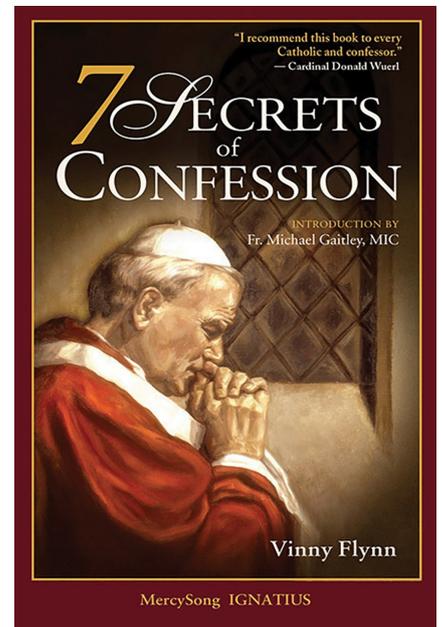
I never thought I would be doing this: writing a commentary on a religious book! The clue to this book is in the title. After 60 years as a Catholic, reading this book opened up a whole new understanding to me. If the only Catholic literature you have read are the Gospels or you were/are terrified of going to Confession, then this book is a very good place to start.

It is not a long, hard read and is written in a very readable style and because of this, I would seriously recommend it. Some of you may be of the vintage where leaving the First Holy Communion lessons you had the words 'Ah! You will go to hell for that' ringing in your ears and were prepared for your First Confession with what amounted to a shopping list; if so, then this is definitely the book for you.

Vinny Flynn does understand these points. He does mention the 'Grocery list' (but he is American) and makes the point that perhaps having a regular list is better than having a list of brand new sins every time. Either way, the commentary of the book moves you away from the terror of Confession and makes the point that God loves you and you are already forgiven so it is not a case of begging for forgiveness because God wants you to love Him. The baggage of sin is the barrier that we put up between the love God has for us and our appreciation of that love. It is as simple as that. Whether you prefer to use the word 'Reconciliation' or 'Confession' is to some extent irrelevant. That will probably depend on when it was you were introduced to the Sacrament and the terminology used at the time. The point of the book is to help bridge the gap between us and God. As I said earlier, we are already forgiven so this book helps to bring us from behind the curtain into the light and from fear of damnation to the assurance that we are loved.

So to work it all out, Confession is an opportunity for us to have that conversation with God using the priest as the intermediary so there are three present at confession (you, the priest and God) all engaged in breaking down the barrier we have put up to God's love. The priest is not judgemental in this process. He is there as the intermediary with the skills and responsibility to calm our fears and breach the barriers we have imposed to the love God already has for us. Unless we go to Confession, then how can this happen?

Give it a read. What have you got to lose? Alternatively, what have you got to gain? If, like me, you gain a new understanding of the purpose of Confession and what it is really for, then it will be worth every minute you spend with your nose in this book. Share it when you have read it and spread the joy and the understanding of what sin is and how Confession is not something to be feared, but is truly the bridge between us and the love of God. The book is available from bookshops, [online](#) and elsewhere.



Cathedral Deanery Parish Websites

Arundel Cathedral Parish: arundelcathedral.uk

Parish of Bognor Regis & Slindon: bognorcatholicparish.co.uk

Parish of Our Lady & the Saints of Sussex: strichardschichester.co.uk

Parishes of Petworth & Midhurst: petworthcatholic.org

Parish of Storrington: ourladyofengland.parishportal.net

Next issue: Spring 2022

If you would like to contribute an item, please e-mail chichester@abdiocese.org.uk,
FAO Becky.

Wishing you a blessed Advent
and a happy and
holy Christmas.