



## GB News 12th February

### Lent an "excellent time" to run newly published Pilgrim courses #pilgrimprogress

**Two new books for The Church of England's national discipleship course, Pilgrim, have been published this week, as Bishops recommend Lent as an "excellent time" to use the latest resources. To encourage online discussion and story sharing, Church House Publishing will be supporting a twitter hashtag, #pilgrimprogress, throughout Lent.**

The new materials, which cover the biblical teachings in the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes of Jesus, complete the first stage of the course which is intended to introduce newcomers to the Christian faith or for those affirming their faith.

The Bishop of Sheffield, Steven Croft said: "Pilgrim aims to be a rich resource for teaching and learning the Christian faith to enquirers and new Christians in every kind of parish. Christians began keeping Lent as a period of preparation for baptism for enquirers. Lent is an excellent time to offer a Pilgrim course to anyone wanting to explore the Christian faith for the first time."

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell added: "The Pilgrim course follows a long tradition of nurturing faith, especially during the season of Lent which was set aside as a time of preparation for Baptism. We're delighted that the new books allow people to continue their pilgrimage to faith in Jesus and enable parishes to provide courses of discovery and discipleship."

Billed as offering an approach of "participation, not persuasion", *Pilgrim: A Course for the Christian Journey* is published by Church House Publishing <http://www.pilgrimcourse.org/> and is part of the Church of England's focus on spiritual and numerical growth.

Assuming little or no knowledge of the Christian faith, Pilgrim can be used at any point on the journey of discipleship and by every tradition in the CofE. The course is endorsed by both Archbishops.

The Christian discipleship course for church congregations and groups of all traditions is the first national course commissioned by the House of Bishops.

Follow on twitter @pilgrimcourse

The Lent campaign, #pilgrimprogress, will provide an opportunity for anyone participating on or leading a course to tweet their progress and engage with the online community on Twitter.

*Pilgrim* is made up of two parts:

**Follow** introduces the Christian faith for newcomers or those exploring confirmation or affirming their faith. The full set of material for this course is now available.

**Grow** is designed for those who want to go further and learn more in discipleship. The material for this stage will be launched in September 2014.

Each stage features four six-session books accompanied by a leader's guide, with extensive, free video and audio resources to support every session online at [www.pilgrimcourse.org](http://www.pilgrimcourse.org)

## York Minster embraces its Viking roots

**The Vikings are often remembered as a force of brutality and godlessness, but York Minster has its roots in a friendlier relationship with the Scandinavian invaders.**



The story of York

Minster's beginnings will be told through its partnership with the 2014 Jorvik Viking Festival, when it will host Viking-themed family events from 18 to 20 February.

Young visitors will learn how the cathedral came to be in its present location thanks to a generous Viking benefactor, and find out about the Minster in a period when native inhabitants lived side by side with Viking settlers.

The events include shield making workshops and Viking Tales in the Children's Chapel each day.

"The land on which York Minster now stands was gifted to the Chapter of York by the Viking Jarl Ulph in the 11th century," explains Kate Whitworth, Learning Manager for York Minster.

"The Viking lord marked the transfer of ownership by gifting an ornately carved elephant's tusk – the Horn of Ulph – which is now 1,000 years old and on public display in the 'Revealing York Minster' in the Undercroft attraction, beneath the Minster.

"In fact, York provided a unique melting pot for Norse and Christian beliefs, with old Scandinavian traditions gradually replaced by Christian ones during the 200 years of Viking settlement – from coins minted with St Peter's name and Thor's hammer, to burial traditions which were uncovered during archaeological digs within the Minster walls."

York Minster will also be teaming up with the neighbouring St William's College to host one of the highlights of the Jorvik Viking Festival, the Ultimate Viking Banquet on the evening of 21 February.

Following welcome drinks and a special choral performance in the Quire of York Minster, diners will then be escorted by their Viking hosts over to St William's College for a superb three course meal.

For more details about the Jorvik Viking Festival, visit [www.jorvik-viking-festival.co.uk](http://www.jorvik-viking-festival.co.uk)

## **Cathedral holds vigil against violence to children**

**The Bishop of St Davids, Wyn Evans, said violence against the weak and defenceless, particularly when sanctioned by the state, should have no place in a civilised society.**

The Bishop was speaking at a vigil at St Davids Cathedral on Monday (Feb 3) dedicated to Ending Legalised Violence against Children. The service was led by the Dean, Jonathan Lean, and Canon Dorrien Davies. It was attended by the Mayor of St Davids, members of the City Council and the Churches' Network for Non-violence which is part of an alliance of organisations under the umbrella of Children Are Unbeatable! Cymru which campaigns for a change in the law to give children the same protection under the law on assault as that currently enjoyed by adults.

Bishop Wyn said the kingdom of God was about relationship and a relationship that embodied virtues of justice, compassion and mercy and respects children; and demands openness, trust and gentleness from us.

He said, "How we treat those who are weak and defenceless is a marker of a civilised society. Violence against those who can least resist it is a miasma which permeates all levels of life, both the public and the private, where children are concerned. Violence, both deliberate and directed and casual and unthinking and directed towards children especially, and by extension the disruption to the life of family and society, violence, especially when it has the sanction of the state and the law behind it, is pandemic.

"Our hope is that whatever small steps we take such as this vigil, they are steps along the way to eliminating violence against children, and anyone who is weak and defenceless and on the edges of life, and making it history, leaving it behind on the threshold of the kingdom with Jesus' words ringing in our ears: "Whoever does not accept the kingdom of heaven like a child will never enter it."

Peter Newell, Coordinator, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, said, "This service at St Davids is a very welcome part of a global inter-faith and human rights movement to challenge and end violence against children disguised as discipline.

"We all pray that the National Assembly will soon be able to vote on a cross-party amendment to remove the 'reasonable punishment' defence and thus give children in Wales the same protection from being hit and deliberately hurt as all other Welsh citizens. This has been the public policy of successive Welsh Governments for more than 11 years. In 2011, the First Minister

confirmed that Wales has the devolved power now to go ahead and legislate. Wales could soon join the 35 states globally, 23 in Europe, which have already prohibited all violent punishment of children.”

Nearly 130 organisations in Wales are signed up to the Children Are Unbeatable! Cymru campaign which aims to secure legal reform at the earliest opportunity. They include leading parenting, children’s rights and child protection organisations, as well as religious leaders.

Bishop Wyn is a signatory to a joint statement from Welsh Christian leaders supporting the removal of the “reasonable punishment” defence:

“Physical punishment has for too long been a common part of our culture. But physical punishment as a form of discipline is incompatible with the core religious values of respect for children’s human dignity, justice and non-violence. There are no circumstances under which this painful and humiliating practice can be justified.”

## **Letter from Catholic bishops to Chief Guide on Promise change**

**The following letter was sent by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales to the Chief Guide.**

Ms Gill Slocombe, Chief Guide, Girlguiding Headquarters, 17?19  
Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PT

4 February 2014

Dear Ms Slocombe

I am writing to you on behalf of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales in regard to concerns that have been raised by Catholic members of The Guide Association with the Bishops. These concerns relate to the introduction of a new ‘Promise’ in September 2013, namely that the words ‘*to be true to myself and develop my beliefs*’ have now replaced ‘*to love my God*’.

I understand that a consultation process was undertaken by The Guide Association prior to the changes to the ‘Promise’ being made. I note, in a letter dated 17 January 2014 to a Guide leader, the following:

*“On the subject of our consulting with faith groups, we had an open consultation and it was possible for all faith communities to participate in that consultation process. We worked with the Interfaith Network to get the messages about the consultation process out to a range of faith communities. None of the churches sought to engage in a dialogue with us.”*

I appreciate only too well that in carrying out any consultation exercise it can be difficult to ensure that all stakeholders are given the opportunity to present their views. I note that you endeavoured to consult a range of faith communities through the ‘Interfaith Network’. Unfortunately, no message or information was communicated to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales by that organisation. There was therefore no opportunity afforded directly by The Guide Association to the Catholic Bishops to make a formal response to your consultation.

As you know, the Catholic Church in England and Wales has many members who have enjoyed participation in the Guide movement as Brownie and Guide leaders, and as Brownie and Girl Guides. Many Brownie and Guide units are Church sponsored, the Church providing accommodation for meetings and a wide range of support. The Bishops are disappointed therefore that no direct approach to them was made by The Guide Association in respect of the consultation over the new Guide Promise.

I fully recognize that The Guide Association, which is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter and its associated Bye-Laws, has every right to determine the rules governing its membership. However, I am sure that you will appreciate just how much concern the change to the Guide Promise has caused to many of the Association’s Leaders, Guides and their families who are Catholics.

I note that No.24 of the most recently amended Bye-Laws of the Royal Charter governing The Guide Association states:

*“The (Guide) Association, being a Founder Member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from 1928, adheres to the Fundamental Principles and undertakes to work for the Object and to abide by the Terms of Membership as set out from time to time in the Constitution of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.”*

I see also that Article 2 of the Fundamental Principles states:



*“The Fundamental Principles of the World Association are those of the Girl Guide/Girl Scout Movement as expressed in the Original Promise and Law, laid down by the Founder.*

### ***Original Promise***

*On my honour, I promise that I will do my best:*

*To do my duty to God and the King;*

*or*

*God and my country.”*

It is surely not unreasonable therefore for many existing Guide Leaders and families of potential new members to ask whether the new normative and only Promise which can be taken by Guides now, adequately adheres to one of the Fundamental Principles if it omits reference to ‘God’ as contained in the Original Promise and Law, as given by the Founder.

Clearly, an alternative new Promise may well be deemed appropriate for those who, in conscience, are unable to make the promise with reference to God but wish to become a full and active member of The Guide Association. Provision for such an alternative has been made by the Scouting movement, with the core Scout Promise remaining in place and remaining *“fully committed as a movement that explores faith and religion as a core element of its programme”*.

Given the common historic origins of the Scout and Guide movements and an ethos which was, until now, based on the Original Promise of the movements’ founders, surely an accommodation for an alternative Promise similar to that secured by the Scouts could have been made for the Girl Guides also?

I note whilst it is mandatory for new Guide Leaders to use the new Guide Promise, it is optional for new Girl Guides. As I understand it though, Girl Guides will not be able to secure the highest Guide awards without making the new Promise. Since for a Catholic, and indeed for some of other faiths, there are well founded spiritual and religious reasons why they might object to making the new Guide Promise, this would seem unnecessarily discriminatory to those committed to a religious faith who wish to become Guide Leaders or achieve the highest awards of the Guide movement.

Whilst fully respecting its independence as a charitable organisation, I do hope and pray that The Guide Association will give further consideration to adopting an alternative Promise which new Guide Leaders and Girl Guides who are Catholics, and those of other religious traditions, can, in good conscience, make fully their own.

Assuring you of my best wishes, I remain

Yours sincerely

Monsignor Marcus Stock

General Secretary

## Liverpool Cathedral made entirely out of Lego



*The Lego model of Liverpool Cathedral by Peter Rogers*

**A model of Liverpool Cathedral made entirely out of Lego has gone on display to the public.**

The model measures 2.5m and weighs around 100 kilos. It was built by Peter Rogers, from Stoneycroft, and even comes complete with working lights.

The cathedral is inviting people to guess how many bricks it is made from and the person with the closest guess will win a family pass to Legoland Windsor.



The Lego model was built by Rogers in his spare time as a way of relieving stress and took just half a year to complete.

He started in June and placed the last brick on 18 December under strict orders from his wife to get the model finished and the dining room table cleared in time for Christmas dinner.

He has also made models of the Millennium Stadium, complete with a closing roof, as well as the Tardis and Hogwarts.

The competition closes on April 4 and all money raised will go to the Cathedral Foundation, which helps keep the cathedral free to visitors by funding the upkeep of the building and the work of the cathedral.

Rogers said: "Building the cathedral was a challenge but very enjoyable. There are more intricacies to the building than you first think, such as porches and detailed brickwork.

"I am delighted that the model is on display at the cathedral itself, especially if it can help raise money for the real thing."

Tina Morris, Cathedral Fundraiser, said: "Our cathedral is referred to by many as the 'great space' – it is fantastic that we now have a 'little space' to go with it.

"Money raised by the Cathedral Foundation goes to the upkeep of the building, so when Peter allowed us to display his Lego model, it seemed like the perfect way to illustrate who we are and what we do and why our building is so important to the people of Liverpool."