



Image of the day -

Wells Cathedral

Reports

Mica pandemic - ‘We need action not words on mica’ says Canon Judi McGaffin

One of the most sobering contributions to debate at this year’s synod came during discussion of the Board of Social Responsibility’s report, when the Curate-in-Charge in Fahan Upper and Fahan Lower, Rev Canon Judi McGaffin, raised an issue which is causing immense anxiety to thousands of homeowners in the Diocese of Raphoe and beyond – mica.

“The word ‘pandemic’ is usually [used] in relation to diseases that relate to either a country or the world,” Canon McGaffin said. “But in terms of this country, another pandemic is now raging in Donegal and beyond – across Mayo, Sligo, Tipperary, Clare, Limerick – and that’s the issue of mica. It may not be a disease in humans, but it will have the potential to adversely affect thousands of people across these counties and beyond.

“We as humans, as has been said several times this morning, we have all been created by God and have needs. Those needs have been described by various people in hierarchies of need. The most basic of those is physiological, which is either water or food or various other things. And then next come safety needs – and that’s security of property, body – and thirdly the need to belong, and that relates to family and community.



“Many people across Donegal have been and will be affected by mica and the mica pandemic. They’ll be affected personally, financially and emotionally, and there are individuals, there are families, there are people who will be affected when community buildings are found to be affected by this issue too. They’re of all ages, all faiths and none, and [from] right across the socio-economic platform.

“There [are] also issues of fairness and justice for all involved. The problem is huge, and it’s a problem that’s multi-faceted and multi-layered, and whatever we do it will be a marathon and not a sprint.

“You, Bishop (of Derry & Raphoe) , along with other faith leaders, have already made a very powerful statement about the issues and now I would like us to think about how we, as a diocese, are going to put ‘meat on the bones’ of that statement. In Inishowen, we have taken our lead from

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you, Bishop – and the group who met and made the statement – and [we] have begun by forming an Inishowen faith leaders' group to begin to think how we as faith leaders can run this marathon with the people who are and will be affected as this pandemic unfolds and people feel the effects on their mental health, their finances and their relationships.

“At our meeting last week, some people were talking about some stories they had already heard. Somebody gave us a story of a lady in the diocese who had lost her husband through Covid over the past year and who's now about to have the house that they built together demolished. So, a loss not only of her husband but now a loss of security and memories, too.

“It goes across all age groups: another story was told of a six-year-old who asked his mother recently – when he saw a small crack in his bedroom wall – was their house falling down too? And in relation to people in Buncrana, in particular, people who have had horrific damage from floods a few years ago, they are now facing – a lot of them – into mica damage in their houses, too. They are in some cases awaiting engineers' reports to find out how bad the damage is, and the anxiety of that waiting is awful.

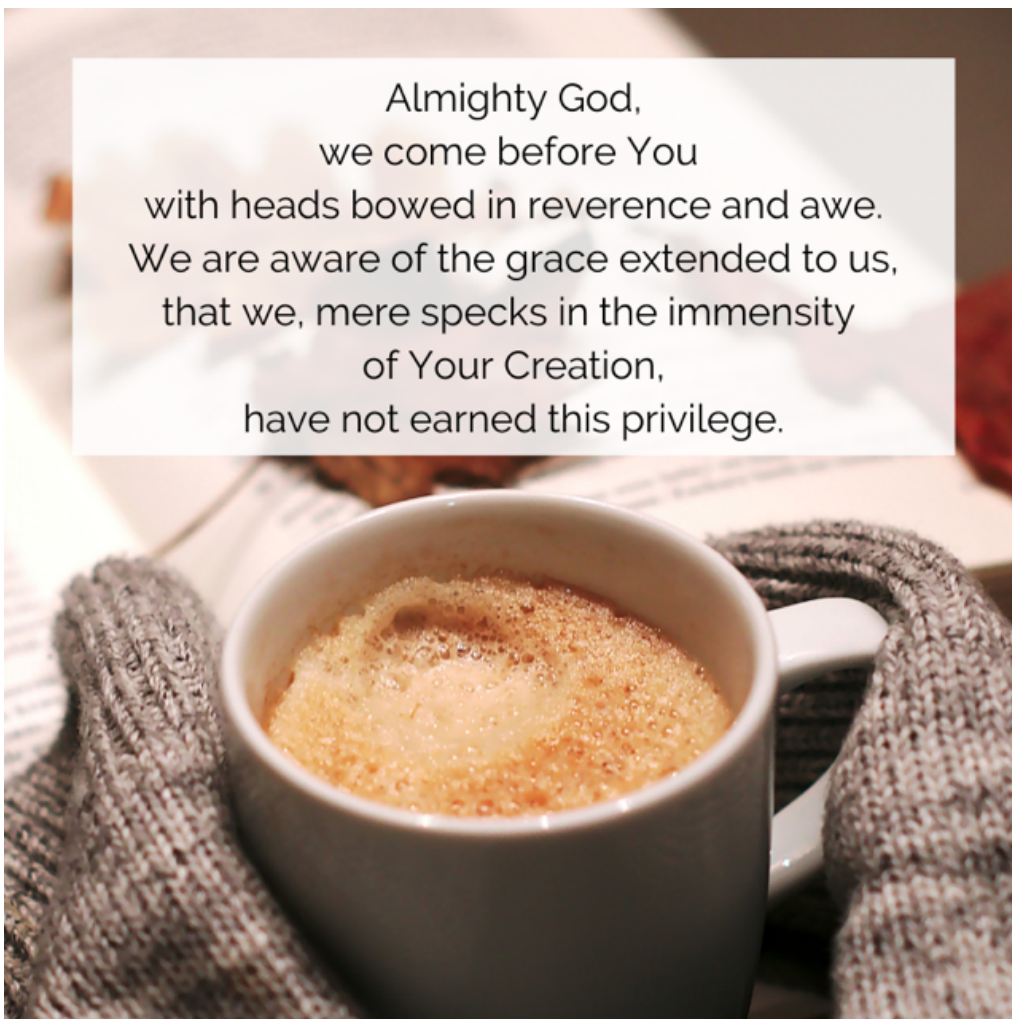
“The not knowing may, however, be a small issue compared to what they're going to face into: leaving home, storing treasured belongings, ensuring you're meeting with all the legal requirements, and then finding a place to live as repairs are ongoing. Not an easy place to be, especially in Buncrana where housing stock is so poor.

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“It has been said several times this morning that we all have a responsibility to care for God’s creatures and we can and should all make a contribution in caring for our neighbours. In your address this morning, Bishop, you mentioned that we are a people who should not just deliver words but deliver actions, too, so I would like this synod – and perhaps the BSR in particular – to consider how, as a faith community, we can walk with our neighbours over this marathon, and work to reach out practically, prayerfully, pastorally and in a planned and even in a passionate way to our neighbours.”

Bishop Andrew recalled for synod his recent visit to a number of Covid homes in Donegal, where he met three

generations of people who had been affected by mica. “[They were] remarkably sobering visits,” he said. “It is catastrophic – it is literally catastrophic – for the families that are affected



Almighty God,
we come before You
with heads bowed in reverence and awe.
We are aware of the grace extended to us,
that we, mere specks in the immensity
of Your Creation,
have not earned this privilege.

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by it and I want to thank you for what you've shared with the synod, and for bringing it onto our agenda and to our attention; and I'm sure the Board of Social Responsibility and the wider diocese will want to take very seriously the comments which you've made today about the actions that we can help with."

Mothers' Union All Ireland President completes third fundraising challenge in Connor Diocese

June Butler, All Ireland President of Mothers' Union (MU), has completed all three of her fundraising challenges in Connor Diocese, walking from St Jude's, Muckamore, to All Saints', Antrim, on October 13.

She was accompanied on the scenic 7km walk by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, the Archdeacon of Connor, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride, and members of local MU branches. (Photo gallery below).

Other members, including former All-Ireland President Paddy Wallace, who is a parishioner of All Saints', Antrim, and Connor Diocesan President Sally Cotter, were at St Jude's to send the walkers on their way.

Because MU fundraising at branch level was suspended due to the pandemic, June set herself the challenge to walk 21 kilometres, made up of three legs of 7km, in each of the 12 Church of Ireland dioceses in Ireland, and sought sponsorship from MU members and members of the public.



June Butler, centre with her fellow walkers including the Bishop and Archdeacon of Connor before leaving St Jude's, Muckamore, to walk to All Saints', Antrim.

Before setting out, June explained that after this Connor walk she would have only three walks remaining.

“I have enjoyed every moment except when I was soaked to the skin in Phoenix Park, Dublin, and one of the walks in the Diocese of Tuam, when I ended up on a slurry path,” June said.

“It has been a joy and delight to have met with members before each walk, and to have people walking with me.”

June's first walk in Connor was in Belfast on April 13, when she walked from Stranmillis to St Anne's Cathedral, and her

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second walk, from Holy Trinity Parish Church, Portrush, to Agherton Parish Church, Portstewart, took place on April 26.

Before the walkers set off, Diocesan President Sally shared a brief reflection and prayers before the hikers headed out from St Jude's towards Six Mile Water Trail.

All monies raised by '21 in 21' walks will go to the 'Mums in May' fund to provide support for MU projects in Ireland and overseas. Donations can be made on this [LINK](#).

Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, former Anglican Bishop of Rochester, joins the Catholic Church

A high-profile Anglican bishop has joined the Catholic Church in what has been described as “one of the most politically significant conversions for a very long time” Simon Caldwell writes in the Catholic Herald.

The reception of Michael Nazir-Ali, the former Anglican Bishop of Rochester, represents the third English episcopal move to Rome this year and the fourth in the last two years.

Bishop Nazir Ali was received into the Catholic faith on September 29, the feast of St Michael and All Angels by Monsignor Keith Newton, the former Anglican who now leads the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

He will serve in the Ordinariate, a Catholic organisation set up by Pope Benedict XVI a decade ago for the corporate reception of Anglicans, after he is ordained deacon at Oscott

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College on October 28 by the Most Rev. Bernard Longley, the Archbishop of Birmingham, and then as priest by Cardinal Vincent Nichols in Westminster Cathedral on October 30.

It is likely that he will be named “Monsignor” by Pope Francis in keeping with titles accorded previously to Anglican bishops who have transferred to Rome.

Dr Nazir-Ali is the first former diocesan – as opposed to suffragan, area or “flying – Anglican bishop to be received into the Catholic Church since Bishop Graham Leonard of London and Bishop Richard Rutt of Leicester in 1994.

He said: “I believe that the Anglican desire to adhere to apostolic, patristic and conciliar teaching can now best be maintained in the Ordinariate.

“Provisions there to safeguard legitimate Anglican patrimony are very encouraging and, I believe, that such patrimony in its liturgy, approaches to biblical study, pastoral commitment to the community, methods of moral theology and much else besides has a great deal to offer the wider Church.

“I am looking forward to receiving from the riches of other parts of the Church, while perhaps making a modest contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of Anglican patrimony within the wider fellowship.

“Ministry in the Church of Pakistan, in the Middle East generally, in the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion remains precious to me and I see this as a further step in the ministry of our common Lord and of his

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people. At this time, I ask for prayers as I continue to pray for all parts of the Church”.

Monsignor Newton said that the bishop has “always shown great interest in the development of the Ordinariate in the United Kingdom”.

“Those of us who serve the Catholic Church within the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham are delighted at his reception into full communion and forthcoming ordination,” he said.

“He brings a great experience of the Anglican Communion and is in a unique place to articulate that Anglican patrimony, described by Pope Benedict XVI as a treasure to be shared, which now has an honoured place in the Universal Church.”

Dr Nazir-Ali was born in Pakistan in 1949 and has both British and Pakistani citizenship. He holds many academic awards including from the Universities of Karachi, Oxford and Cambridge, as well as a Lambeth Doctor of Divinity.

He has taught and researched at a number of institutions and continues to teach and supervise research. He was ordained an Anglican priest in 1976 and served in England and Pakistan before being consecrated Bishop of Raiwind in 1984.

He was the General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society (1989-94) before his appointment as Bishop of Rochester in 1994.

PRAY FOR COP26

Creator of our common home
Hear the cry of the earth
Our world stands in great peril
Many are suffering
We have put at risk present and future
through the rapid warming of the
earth and the careless destruction of
its beauty
Give to the leaders of the world fresh
hope and courage
As they gather for COP26
Unite us all in a common mission to
heal and cherish our environment
And steward the resources of our
world for future generations
May this conference be a turning
point in human history
For the sake of all the peoples of the
earth.
Amen.

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As such, he entered the House of Lords in 1999 and was active in the areas of international relations, dialogue among people of different faiths, freedom of expression and speech and defence of human dignity at every stage of life.

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Since resigning in 2009, he has been Director of Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue, which prepares Christians for ministry in situations where the Church is under pressure and in danger of persecution.

His reception into the Catholic Church came just weeks after Jonathan Goodall, the former “flying” Bishop of Ebbsfleet, stepped down from office to become a Catholic following a period of reflection which, he said, was “among the most testing periods of my life”.

In May, John Goddard, the former Bishop of Burnley, was received into the Catholic Church in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool, while Dr Gavin Ashenden, a former royal chaplain to the Queen and traditionalist Anglican bishop, was received into the faith at Shrewsbury Cathedral at Christmas 2019.

Bishop Nazir-Ali, 72, was born in Karachi, Pakistan, to a Methodist mother and a father who converted to Christianity from Shia Islam. He was sent to a Catholic school and attended Masses there.

He started to call himself a Christian from the age of 15 and was formally received into the Anglican Church at the age of 20.

After ordination in 1976 he served in parishes in Karachi and Lahore and became the youngest bishop in the Anglican Communion when he was appointed Bishop of Raiwind in West Punjab in 1984.

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He was brought to the UK by Archbishop Robert Runcie when his life was deemed to be in danger and soon became one of the best recognised voices in the Church of England, considering himself both Catholic and Evangelical, staunchly pro-life and a firm believer in marriage and the family. He is married with two children.

Along with Rowan Williams, his was one of two names presented to Tony Blair in 2002 as a possible successor to George Carey as Archbishop of Canterbury.

The bishop has served for many years as a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission and also of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission.

Dr Ashenden said that Dr Nazir-Ali's reception through the Ordinariate was "a move of monumental proportion and significance".

He said: "Many of the former high profile conversions were from people who identified as Anglo Catholics.

"The fact that Nazir Ali's background is evangelical and more deeply rooted in the assumptions of the Protestant reformation makes the trajectory of his journey more significant and informative.

"It signifies two things in particular. The first is that the schism in the church rooted in the Reformation has run out of steam and has been replaced by a fresh but no less significant cultural and philosophical realignment; the struggle has coalesced into one between the remnants of

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Christendom and a fresh secular assault by (cultural) Marxism; two utopian visions in direct conflict.

“The second is that in Nazir-Ali’s judgement Anglicanism has succumbed to the forces of progressive secularism and only the Catholic Church can be counted on to defend the faith against this new secularism that has such ambitious totalitarian instincts.”

He added: “The visionary project of Pope Benedict XVI’s Ordinariate will be significantly strengthened and encouraged by his conversion and membership.”

The Reverend Philip Wells, Vicar of Wantage, has also been received into the Catholic Church together with his wife and daughters after stepping down in August.

He said in a statement to his parishioners that “we have become increasingly uncomfortable with the direction of the Church (of England) in matters liturgical, ecclesiological, sacramental and moral”. Courtesy Catholic Herald 14 October 2021

Welsh vicar who survived COVID-19 publishes hymnal to inspire others

A retired vicar who almost lost his life to COVID-19 is publishing a new hymn book in the hope it will inspire others facing difficult times.

The Rev. Paul Bigmore, 64, spent three weeks in a hospital last year fighting for his life after contracting severe

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COVID-19 pneumonia. He pulled through thanks to the care and dedication of hospital staff but still suffers considerable health issues.

His new book, called “Reflecting on a Journey,” is his fourth book of hymns and includes a “COVID-19 hymn.” Dedicated to all who have died of COVID-19 throughout the United Kingdom, the book will be launched by former Archbishop of Wales Barry Morgan in Bigmore’s hometown of Port Talbot at St Mary’s Parish Church on Oct. 24.

“It has been a dreadful time for everyone – we have all suffered in some way because of the pandemic,” Bigmore said. “Hymn-writing is my great love and passion and this book is my way of thanking people for their kindness to me and offering them hope, love and light as they too face difficult days.”

People and places

Season of Creation Service in St Anne’s Church, Shandon

Stephen Spillane (churchwarden of St Anne's Church) writes: St Anne’s Shandon has marked the Season of Creation for the last number of years, and this year was no different. The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. This year, the season started on the 1st of September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ended on the 4th of October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron



Members of the congregation with the Rev. Alan Marley and Stephen Spillane (right) and Fr. Patrick (middle)

saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations. The theme for the Season of Creation 2021 was 'Restoring Our Common Home'. During this time we have been asked to join together to celebrate creation and protect our common home through prayer, reflection and action.

During the five Sundays that make up the Season of Creation, with the help of visiting Clergy and Lay Readers, we included a special prayer in our worship each Sunday and also included material on our service sheets each week about the Season of Creation. On the Eve of the Feast of St Francis, and the last Sunday in the Season of Creation we were delighted to welcome Fr. Patrick Young the Guardian churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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of the Franciscan Community in Cork City to visit us and to preach on the theme 'Restoring Our Common Home'.

Fr. Patrick spoke on the topic of our Common Home, about St Francis and how the Creator and His Creation is very much at the heart of Franciscan Spirituality. He also spoke about how, given the current conversations around a new 'Thanksgiving holiday', would a day to mark the 'Care of Creation' not be more appropriate, given the challenges that face us with regard to the Climate Crisis.

We were delighted to once again welcome Fr. John O'Donoghue and members from the Climate Justice groups in the North Cathedral, Blackpool, The Glen, Ballyvolane, and Sunday's Well who joined us in worship on the day and we look forward to continuing to work with them in caring for our common home. We are very thankful to Rev. Alan Marley who took the service and made it such a special occasion and Adam Nuzum, our organist, who played with great verve. St Anne's has been hosting the Climate Justice Candle since early March 2020 as we received the candle just prior to the first lockdown and it got 'stranded' in Shandon! We were indeed very glad to have the candle 'Shining a Light on Climate Justice' during the service. We are hoping, with restrictions being lifted very soon, to send the candle on its way to a new home!

Eve of All Saints Eucharist - What are you afraid of?

Christ Church Cathedral Dublin is resuming the annual 'What are you afraid of?' service. A "series of interactive

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prayer spaces will be available, helping us to reflect and offer our prayers for the impacts that the coronavirus pandemic has had on lives and livelihoods around the world, as well as other fears and anxieties we may be facing. Prayer ministry will also be available in the context of an alternative style All Saints' Eucharist. Our preacher will be our placement student, Jane Burns". Doors open at 18.30. Following the conclusion of the service, the cathedral will remain open for private prayer until 20.30.

Officially in command of the CLCGB

John Willams recently appointed Officer in Command of the Ulster Regiment of the Church Lads and Church Girls Brigade was presented with his Officers Commission for the post by the Most Reverend John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland.

At the same time, John's Predecessor Melvyn Lockhart received from the Archbishop his Commission as Deputy Governor of the CLCGB at National Level.

Derry & Raphoe evangelising at home and abroad

The Diocese's 'Mahajanga Calling' appeal has so far raised over £20,000 to help the church in North West Madagascar, where a 'son of the Diocese', Rt Rev Hall Speers, is serving as Bishop.



Canon Crooks, who is a brother-in-law of Bishop Speers, has been an enthusiastic fundraiser on behalf of the Mahajanga Calling appeal.

The figure was disclosed by the chairman of the Board of Mission and Unity during the final discussion of this year's synod. Rev Canon Paul Hoey said he wanted to thank those parishes and individuals who had supported the project. "Although it hasn't been easy to raise funds over the past year," he said, "we have – at the last count, over £20,000 that has gone to Mahajanga.

"I shouldn't pick anybody out," Canon Hoey said, "but I will mention Canon David Crooks' special fundraising effort – if only because I've been wanting to tell him to get on his bike for years – but well done, David."

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Canon Crooks, who is a brother-in-law of Bishop Speers, has been an enthusiastic fundraiser on behalf of the Mahajanga Calling appeal. Among his ventures was a sponsored cycle, in three legs, around different parts of the Inishowen and Raphoe rural deaneries.

“If you ever have a day when you’re feeling a low energy count,” Canon Hoey said, “I recommend reading Bishop Hall Speers’ newsletter which is humorously entitled ‘Our Mad Life’ – as in Madagascar but also ‘mad’.

“I want to quote a bit from his most recent newsletter. He’s talking about a visit that he made to some parishes in his diocese very recently. So, he says: ‘After tinkering with the engine of the catechist’s car, we were on our way to inspect the site for the new clergy house and – eventually – church.’ (I just want to point out that it’s our money that’s helping them to build this clergy house and church and amazingly you can build a rectory and a church there for about £6,000).

“The Bishop says, ‘The accounts in this parish show how little the priest and his family have been paid: a miniscule amount in cash and 15kg of rice per annum. Our home help’s family consume 15kg of rice per week.’ (Again, I would point out that the money from our project is helping the diocese there to buy rice fields which inject finance into the life not only of the church, but support clergy and people working in the local community).

“I’ll go on with the bishop’s report. He says: ‘The local church is run by an incredibly energetic lady, Mlle Angeline – she’s one of the evangelists there. With her own hands

she helped the men build the temporary mud and thatched roof. There was the most wonderful atmosphere of both reverence and celebration. We even had a choir who danced as they sang. I was conscious that I was the only one wearing shoes. What a privilege it had been to meet many lovely people, share in uplifting worship and travel safely. Thank you to all who made this possible through your generosity.’ Now, he’s speaking to a wider group of people when he gives thanks but he’s certainly speaking to us in the Diocese of Derry [and Raphoe] in his words of appreciation.”

Canon Hoey said the Diocesan Office will continue to accept donations from any parish or individuals who haven’t yet had an opportunity to contribute to the Mahajanga Calling appeal.

On a separate matter relating to the work of the Board of Mission and Unity, Canon Hoey said the Church of Ireland had recently authorised the appointment of a team of people with a remit to support and equip pioneer ministries and new forms of church in every diocese. “I don’t think there’s any doubt that the pandemic has exacerbated the decline that had already set in to many parts of the church,” Canon Hoey said, “particularly among younger families and so on, and that we urgently need to explore new ways of being church. And this is part of what the Centre of Mission is about.

“I’m aware of centres of mission already up and running – or about to be set up – in the Dioceses of Cork, Dublin, Tuam, Meath, Armagh, Connor and Down, so we’re actually part of a minority of dioceses that don’t yet have one.

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“The hub of the project that we’re working on at the moment is likely to have a focus in the Waterside area of the city – there’ll be a cooperation between the two Waterside parishes – and the person or the people who will be appointed will have a dual remit. One is to focus on a particular area of the Waterside, and – through service, building community and evangelism – to pioneer a new form of church. And secondly, to equip and to train others right throughout the diocese to be evangelists. We’ve just heard in the report from Mahajanga how hugely significant evangelists are in that part of the world and I think they could be and ought to be here as well.”

Church Army would assist with training and with the setting up of the project, Canon Hoey said, but the Diocese would also have to find around £40,000 per annum. “Some of the dioceses that I’ve already mentioned that have got centres of mission have fewer resources than we do,” he said, “so I don’t see why it shouldn’t be possible for us to take the leap of faith and go ahead with this project, and we’re hoping before too long to put a concrete proposal before Diocesan Council which I hope will be favourably looked at.”

RSCM seeks friends

RSCM - “As an educational charity we urgently need to enable more children to discover the joy of singing in church. BUT we need your support if we are to secure the future of church music for our children & grandchildren!

Please help us in this mission by becoming a Friend of the RSCM.

Poem for today

The Autumn

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Go, sit upon the lofty hill,
And turn your eyes around,
Where waving woods and waters wild
Do hymn an autumn sound.
The summer sun is faint on them --
The summer flowers depart --
Sit still -- as all transform'd to stone,
Except your musing heart.

How there you sat in summer-time,
May yet be in your mind;
And how you heard the green woods sing
Beneath the freshening wind.
Though the same wind now blows around,
You would its blast recall;
For every breath that stirs the trees,
Doth cause a leaf to fall.

Oh! like that wind, is all the mirth
That flesh and dust impart:
We cannot bear its visitings,
When change is on the heart.
Gay words and jests may make us smile,
When Sorrow is asleep;

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But other things must make us smile,
When Sorrow bids us weep!

The dearest hands that clasp our hands, --
Their presence may be o'er;
The dearest voice that meets our ear,
That tone may come no more!
Youth fades; and then, the joys of youth,
Which once refresh'd our mind,
Shall come -- as, on those sighing woods,
The chilling autumn wind.

Hear not the wind -- view not the woods;
Look out o'er vale and hill-
In spring, the sky encircled them --
The sky is round them still.
Come autumn's scathe -- come winter's cold --
Come change -- and human fate!
Whatever prospect Heaven doth bound,
Can ne'er be desolate.



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Speaking to the Soul

Bible verse, thought for the day and prayers - on site daily

