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# Universe weekly pullout Around the Parishes

CATHOLIC NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM ACROSS THE UK AND IRELAND



## Solar first for Middlesbrough parish



The new solar panels on the roof of St Gabriel's presbytery pictured from the school next door

A **Middlesbrough** parish is thought to be the first in the diocese to install solar panels, which are now powering the church, presbytery and parish hall.

St Gabriel's in Ormesby came up with the idea after a visit from Deacon David Cross of CAFOD, who talked first to a small meeting and then at all weekend Masses about Pope Francis' environmental encyclical *Laudato Si' – On Care For Our Common Home*.

"David did a great job of getting us all thinking and explaining how caring for God's creation and stewardship of the Earth is all part of our worship of God and our relationship

with him," said parish priest Canon John Lumley.

"Afterwards we distributed copies of the environmental policy drawn up by our diocesan Justice and Peace group for parishioners to look at and we made it the main agenda of our parish pastoral council meeting.

"We divided the council into small groups and asked them to come up with ideas for us to work on, based on David's input and the message of Pope Francis. I hoped we would decide on three projects we could adopt as a parish – but we ended up with ten!"

They included planting a wildflower garden, putting up bird

boxes, better recycling and a monthly green tip in the newsletter – as well as investigating the possibility of solar panels for the presbytery roof.

"I asked Peter Carey, from the parish council, to look into it and he found a company called GoEcoRenewables that gave us a really good price to put up a single group of solar panels," said Canon John.

"We also mentioned our plans in the newsletter and discovered by chance that one of our retired parishioners had worked for a company that installed solar panels, so he was able to help with further advice.

"GoEcoRenewables were very helpful and worked hard to make it a very simple and painless process, completing the installation in one day.

"We managed to install all the panels discreetly on the presbytery roof, which means we haven't in any way detracted from the lovely roofline of our church."

The work was carried out just before the closure of a government buyback tariff scheme that means the parish will actually get money for the electricity produced, rather than just reducing its own bill.

The total price of installation, including the erection of scaffolding, was around £5,000, with an estimated return of £500 in electricity back each year.

"Within ten years the panels should have paid for themselves," said Canon John. "But more importantly, we will be reducing our carbon footprint throughout that period."

Work has also taken place to clear the parish gardens, prune trees, plant new shrubs and put up bird boxes.

"We're also going to be planting wildflowers to add to the daffodils we already have and we'll see the fruits of that in the spring and summer," Canon John added.



## Happy birthday Bishop Hopes

**Norwich:** Bishop Alan Hopes marked his 75th birthday last Sunday when parishioners of St John the Baptist Cathedral gathered in the Narthex after the Solemn Mass and sang Happy Birthday to him.

Jo Graham, one of the parishioners, had baked a very large cake which was cut by Bishop Hopes helped by two young people from the First Holy Communion group at the cathedral, Leanne (pictured above on the left) and Samy (both aged seven years).

As is customary for Catholic bishops, when they reach the age of 75, Bishop Hopes will be writing a letter to Pope Francis tendering his resignation as Bishop of East Anglia.

The normal convention is that a bishop will stay in post until his successor is appointed.

The pope is assisted in the appointment process by the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, His Excellency Archbishop Edward Adams, who will be making a three-day visit to the diocese in May.

## Birmingham celebrates St Patrick's Day

**Birmingham:** The St Patrick's Day Parade Committee, Birmingham, oversaw one of the biggest St Patrick's Day events in Europe last Sunday.

The parade started at 12noon with floats, music and dancing through the High Street, Digbeth.

The day began earlier though, with Mass in St Anne's Church, Digbeth, at 10am.

The celebrant this year was Monsignor Daniel McHugh, born in Birmingham of Irish parents.

St Anne's is an historic place, being where Blessed John Henry Newman began the mission in the 1840s. Today it continues to be at the heart of life in multi-faith, multi-cultural Birmingham.

Interestingly, in the light of the sad events in New Zealand, St Anne's is home to many outreach projects including the Birinus Communitas Wellbeing Project, where Catholic and Muslim work in partnership for their respective elderly people with the City of Birmingham in support.



**Southwark Archdiocese:** The diocese was delighted to welcome so 254 catechumens and 160 candidates, plus their godparents, sponsors and families to St George's Cathedral for the Rite on Election and Continuing Call to Conversion on Saturday 9th March.

Canon Richard Hearn, Dean of the Cathedral, warmly greeted the congregation, whilst Dr Mark Nash of the Centre for Catholic Formation stated that it was good to see so many people and encouraged catechumens and candidates to stay true to the path of communion and continuing conversation with the Church this Easter. He went on to say that there are many opportunities to be involved in the life of the Church and that it is good to feed and nurture active participation and continue learning.

Bishop Paul Hendricks, Bishop Pat Lynch and Monsignor Matthew Dickens presented catechumens and candidates from across the diocese to Archbishop Peter Smith: Each person rose from their seat as their name was called.