



## CAAPA NEWSLETTER OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2020

Hello everyone,

We hope this still finds all our members and families, friends and loved ones continuing in health and safety during this interminably uncertain period and particularly for anyone alone as we draw towards winter.

We send good wishes and hope that you are finding the courage and resilience to live with the changing guidelines and keep spirits high despite the challenges.

The appeal for playlets on our theme **Action for the Church in Need** is starting to bear fruit, as scripts are submitted. We would love to receive more of your creative work conceived during lockdown! Please be daring and send in those masterpieces! (The intended date for the event will have to be pushed back to the new year, for all the obvious reasons. But, fear not, it will happen eventually!)).



Work is taking place to bring our website up to date. If you have any suggestions to make it more attractive and welcoming, please send us them.

My email is: [kennethmichaels@hotmail.com](mailto:kennethmichaels@hotmail.com)

### We start with our Memorial Book:

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### MEMORIAL LIST FOR OCTOBER

**Sir Ralph Richardson Vice President: 10 October**

A definitively English actor who, with **John Gielgud** and **Laurence Olivier**, was one of the trinity of actors who dominated the British Stage for much of the 20th century.

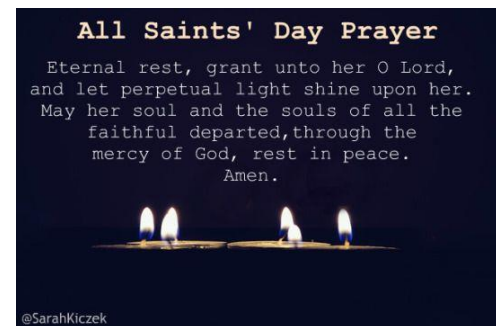
### Michael Slater recalls:

**Sir Ralph** was for many years a much-loved Vice President of the *Catholic Stage Guild*, but we very nearly lost him! I attended a carol service at Corpus Christi as a new member of the Guild. I found an order of service and it did not seem to bear any resemblance to what was actually going on in the service. It was being led by **Fr Kit Cunningham**, who threw his order of service in the air in despair!! **Gabby Lister**, who found herself sitting next to Sir Ralph, said he was a most charming man. Sir Ralph was reading right towards the end of the service and this had now reached almost two hours! It was a freezing night, and the church was icy cold; after his reading Sir Ralph tottered out into the night looking white and very shaken. He did deliver a splendid reading, of course!

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### Michael Slater writes:

**Deryck Guyler** was born in Liverpool and so was a scouser. He often played on his accent in comedy series. He moved to Wallasey (New Brighton) near to where I was brought up in the Wirral. I also played in Rep there! In later life he moved to Brisbane, Australia.





His son Christopher was very pleased that we were celebrating a memorial mass for his father at *Corpus Christi*. It was very difficult to arrange at long distance, as his son had a special deal with an airline, so we had to work around this. I had a phone call at 7a.m. one morning to fix the date - March 31. When I got off the phone Ann, my wife, said 'nice one! Our Wedding anniversary!!'

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An article unearthed by Michael Slater from *Catholic Life* (2003):

## The Catholic Stage Guild

by Greg Watts

Each year in London leading professionals from the entertainment industry come to gather to offer advice to final year drama students. The event is sponsored by the Catholic Stage Guild, which has over the years counted some of the biggest stars of stage as screen as its members.

The Catholic Stage Guild was born in 1911. Its major concern was to help Catholic artists on tour to fulfil their religious duties. By 1920, the guild had 2,242 members. In 1942 the guild disappeared but was reborn in 1950 at the request of Cardinal Griffin.

Today, the guild has around 200 members throughout the country. Apart from the students' evening, it holds a number of other events each year, including an annual Mass, at Corpus Christi, Maiden Lane, London, an Ash Wednesday Mass at the National Theatre, a signed Mass for those with impaired hearing and an annual day of recollection at Allen Hall. It also provides an Eamon Andrews bursary and the Alec Guinness Award.

Fr. John Macdonald, parish priest of Corpus Christi, is the guild chaplain. In the church is a statue of St Genesius, patron saint of actors, which has cards with prayers for actors and musicians in front of it. Because the church is in the West End, many actors often pop in, he says. "A lot of the Phillippino cast of *Miss Saigon* used to come to the

6pm Mass on Saturday. And Roger Wright, who had the main part in *The Lion King*, also used to come to the Mass. If Frank Finlay's in town, he often comes to midday Mass. I did the weddings of his two sons".

"After one Lenten lunchtime Mass, celebrated by Cardinal Basil Hume, I went downstairs to lock the church, and I found Sir Alec Guinness there. He asked me where the statue of The Little Flower was because he wanted to light a candle".

Its reputation as the church for Catholic actors has spread beyond Britain, he adds. "We used to have an office in the basement. People from all over the world used to visit. James Cagney and Bob Hope's wife have paid a visit. And Frank Sinatra came once to light a candle to St Anthony. He had his minders with him and one of them patted the statue on the head".

Fr. John presented the Knight of St Gregory medal to the late Michael Williams, a former guild chairman, in his home in Surrey in 2001. His wife, Judi Dench, switched on the baby alarm so that family and friends downstairs could

The late Michael Williams with his wife, Judi Dench. Michael was presented the Knight of St Gregory medal shortly before his death by Fr. John Macdonald



The late Sir Alec Guinness





# Catholic Association of Performing Arts

~~Frank Finlay C.B.E.  
Vice President Catholic Stage Guild~~

Simple supper: Haddock Fillet. With salad (Raisins & grapes & Couscous  
Pudding: Orange, banana, & yoquart.

Richard O' Callaghan Chairman Catholic Stage Guild.

At present appearing at the Globe Theatre, bankside.

Vegetarian: Mashed potatoes, with lots of butter and a little milk,  
three cloves of garlic, and last min throw in frozen Petite pois and stir well

Michael Slater.  
Master of ceremonies Catholic Stage Guild

2 medium onions, 2 cloves of garlic 3 tablespoons of oil  
Red pepper . Tin of plum tomatoes. 4 eggs. salt & freshly gound pepper.

Melt the sliced onions in oli in heavy pan add crusdhed cloves of garlic and gook  
very gently, without browning for 15 mins. add sliced peppers (removing all seeds)  
add them to the onions and cook without browning until peppers are tender.  
add the tin of plum tomatoes, with wood spatulate break up the tomatoes,  
add a little salt and simmer on for about ten mins, now beat the eggs lightly in a bowl,  
season with salt & pepper and stir them into the dish when the eggs start to thicken,  
the dish is cooked. Serve in a plain earthenware dish with basket of hot crusty  
rolls.

Dish eaten by Basque Sailors, both rich & simple.

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NB: Our MC **Michael Slater** has been busy - dying in the last few weeks! Despite Covid, Michael has been sought after by various film companies and some of the roles he's played required him to expire!

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**An item suggested by Nadia Ostacchini:**

## **A NEW VIDEO SERIES BY LEADERS AND FOR LEADERS**

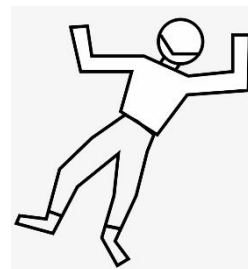
Our world is changing rapidly, with new rules for how we live, work, and socialise in a state of flux across the nation. Whilst many grasped the gravity of COVID-19 months ago, few anticipated the breadth of change we are now all living through.

Churches and charities adapted well to the initial lockdown by creating online services and online giving, but as we negotiate new ways of working, living and doing church, the challenges ahead are more uncertain and even greater.

Their new leadership video series will help and inspire church pastors and charity CEOs who are searching for new ideas on giving and generosity and financial guidance to keep pace with a constantly changing environment. In the debut episode, we are joined by **Stewart McCulloch**, CEO of **Stewardship**, and **Dr John Kirkby CBE**, Founder of **Christians Against Poverty**.

### Their first video discusses:

- The wisdom and skills needed to lead an organisation through a crisis and into an uncertain future
- The biblical passages that have underpinned confident leadership when dealing with tough decisions







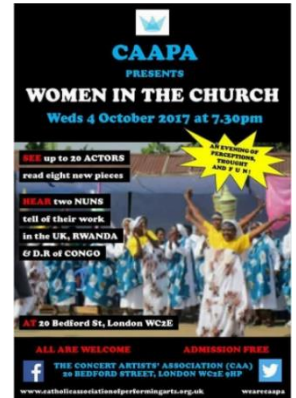
- How financial contingency plans are essential for immediate and long-term planning.

**\*\* Watch Church and charity leaders: conversations in a time of crisis by clicking [HERE](#) \*\***

NB: Members will remember we dedicated an evening of Playlets a couple of years ago to raise money and awareness of the vital work done by the SVP:

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**And now for a lovely contribution from Prue Gillet:**



As requested in CaAPA's August Newsletter, I recently sent Kenneth the monologue I performed for the "Women in the Church" evening in 2017, so that **Jeremy Rowe's** idea of getting some or all of the collected playlets published could be explored further. Just as I had done three years ago with **Robin** and **Molly**, I was at pains to explain to Kenn why I was sending him a piece not written by me and not even written by a member of CaAPA! Kenn thought that you all might be interested in hearing, or rehearing, the story I sent him....

*Anything Boys Can Do* was written by a very good friend of mine, **Katherine Mary Bryden**, who died of cancer in November 2015. The monologue was shared with me by **Ray Loveridge**, her widower, along with her other unpublished fictional pieces, including one or two prize-winning short stories.

Although Mary wasn't a member of CaAPA, she was a very good Catholic (one of the best) and one of the world's leading experts in a dramatist hailed by some as the greatest and/or most significant of modern times, namely Samuel Beckett.

Mary first studied French and English at Reading University where, at various stages of her career, she was to move from undergraduate to doctoral student to research fellow to lecturer and eventually to professor, all the while gaining an international reputation as a highly respected research scholar. In fact, Mary remained at Reading for the majority of her career. There, at her beloved Beckett Archives, she helped play host to notable Beckettian actors such as **Billie Whitelaw** and enjoyed the long-term support and friendship of **James Knowlson**, her mentor and PhD supervisor and the writer of Beckett's authorized biography (*Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* 1996). Mary's research led to a torrent of published articles and papers, not to mention her books (e.g. *Women in Samuel Beckett's Prose and Drama: Her Own Other* 1993 and *Samuel Beckett and the Idea of God* 1998). Just thinking of these makes me realize how glad I am that Mary's broadminded, openhearted curiosity allowed her to embrace the very different interests of others - people like me, for example, a relatively unread philistine, whose number one 20th century icon fluctuates between **Elvis Presley** and **Marilyn Monroe!**

I met Mary in 1976 at St John's College of Further Education in Manchester, where we were both embarking on a one-year Postgraduate Bilingual Secretarial course. On getting her BA Honours degree, Mary thought that research into Samuel Beckett might be a selfish choice, and that she should take up some other, more altruistic form of service, such as nursing. She consequently tried nursing and promptly fainted at the sight of blood. Meanwhile, I had gone into education only to find I was allergic to school-teaching. Neither of us really knew what we were meant to be doing, but we thought broadening our knowledge of French vocabulary would benefit us anyway, as we had both



done very literary undergraduate courses in French, and grappling with the translation of socio-economic, commercial and political documents seemed an excellent use of a year of our lives while we were figuring out our true vocation. As our desks were on opposite sides of the classroom, there was little interaction between us for several months, but then, in the final term, I found out somehow that Mary was a Catholic. I was preparing to become one at that time and asked her to be my sponsor, and so our precious, blessed friendship began, and for the next 40 years some of my most memorable experiences were shared with her.

Losing Mary was a huge blow for me, and members of CaAPA were a great support to me throughout this bereavement. It is not surprising, therefore, that, when we were asked to submit playlets for the "Women in the Church" evening, I immediately thought of *Anything Boys Can Do*. I saw the offering as something I could do in memory of Mary and as a "Thank you" to the CaAPA members who prayed for her, for her family and for me in the last few weeks of her life. Although the piece is undated, both Ray and I believe *Anything Boys Can Do* was written when Mary was young, and it is undoubtedly a semi-autobiographical work.

In spite of her interest in gender studies and feminist writers such as *Hélène Cixous*, I have always resisted describing Mary herself as a feminist - even though, on hearing that I had somehow graduated in French without having read *Simone de Beauvoir's* *Second Sex*, she promptly went out and treated me to a copy! The feminist label didn't sit well on Mary for me, simply because she was one of those whole, authentic people who defy labels. Mary didn't believe in equal rights for women, she believed in equal rights for all human beings irrespective of their gender, age, colour or creed.

Although she didn't dwell on it, become bitter or even talk about it with anyone other than her nearest and dearest, I know that Mary suffered from her thwarted vocation to the priesthood and, whenever I've spoken at memorial services for her, I've pointed out that, had she been born an Anglican, academia and Beckett fans would have missed out, for she would almost certainly have gone into the priesthood and proved fierce competition for *Libby Lane* and *Rachel Treweek!*

Although much of the material Mary researched could not have been more profound or metaphysical, there was nothing weighty or ponderous about her personality. She was invariably cheerful, light-hearted, and fun to be with, had a terrific sense of humour that was dry, witty, mischievous and always appropriate. Indeed, *Anything Boys Can Do* is a wonderful example of how Mary would treat controversial, thorny or painful topics uncompromisingly but with great sensitivity and gentleness. I hope you enjoy revisiting the piece if it is eventually published alongside the other memorable playlets written by CaAPA members.

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*... and now for something completely different! ...*

#### **NATIONAL GALLERY: SIN**

The first exhibition in the UK exploring sin in art will be staged at the National Gallery this autumn.

Sin will bring together paintings from the National Gallery's collection dating from the *16th to the 18th century* with loans from important private and public collections including modern and contemporary works by *Andy Warhol*, *Tracey Emin*, and *Ron Mueck*. There will be 14 works on display.



**Bronzino's An Allegory with Venus and Cupid**

Sin has been a recurrent subject for artistic exploration over the centuries across the world. Sin in a religious context means an immoral act that is considered to be a transgression against divine law. In a secular world, it means a serious or regrettable fault, offence or omission. Sin is as universal as it is personal. Most people at some point in their life will do something they regret,

although the gravity of their 'sin' and the way each individual or society deals with it very much depends on the country, time and socio-cultural context. While the concerns, ambiguities, perceptions and representations of sin extend across world religions and to those of no faith, Sin will primarily explore this concept within a Christian context. Two early paintings in the exhibition, *The Garden of Eden* by **Jan Brueghel the Elder**, 1613 (on loan from a private collection, Hong Kong) and *Adam and Eve* by **Lucas Cranach the Elder**, 1526 (on loan from *The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London*) feature scenes from the **Old Testament** which have helped define the concept of sin in the collective 'Western' consciousness: the moment described in the **Book of Genesis** when Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge and are subsequently expelled from the Garden of Eden for committing the first sin.

Both pictures are ambiguous as they tell and warn the viewer about sin and yet portray the naked body as seductive and a potential source of temptation.

Many artists over the centuries have sought to depict the seven deadly sins (pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth), the group of sins defined as the worst by the *sixth-century pope*, **Gregory I (Saint Gregory the Great)**. The *18th-century British painter* **William Hogarth** was a master at depicting sinful behaviour. In his *Marriage A-la-Mode* series, and in particular in *The Tête à Tête*, about 1743 (the National Gallery, London), he shows a young 'couple of convenience', sprawled slothfully in their Palladian London townhouse. The wife has tea for one, an indication of the separate life she leads from her husband. The husband, meanwhile, does not even try to hide his mistress's cap as it falls out of his pocket, attracting the attention of his curious dog. A large black spot on his neck denotes he has caught syphilis, presumably from his mistress.

While many paintings depict sinful behaviour, some portray people who are regarded as being without sin, notably **the Virgin Mary**, whom Christians recognise as the mother of God's son, **Jesus**. Her purity is equated with her beauty in **Diego Velázquez's** *Immaculate Conception*, 1618-19 (the National Gallery, London).

Other paintings show acts of redemption, atonement and confession: the options available to cancel out sin. Few artists have addressed repentance as directly as **Andy Warhol** did in some of his last paintings, such as *Repent*, and *Sin No More!*, 1985-6 (*ARTIST ROOMS: Tate and National Galleries of Scotland*) based on a leaflet distributed in the streets of New York.

Some works in the exhibition shed light on the power of confession, either to free oneself from the burden of sin or to obtain forgiveness. *The Mass of Saint Giles*, about 1500 (the National Gallery, London) shows the *Holy Roman Emperor* **Charlemagne** kneeling in front of **Saint Giles**, whose prayers of intercession to **God** led to the absolution of the **Emperor** from his sins. **Tracey Emin's** neon work *It was just a kiss*, 2010 (Exhibition Copy, Courtesy of *the Artist and White Cube*) could be considered an open-ended and ambiguous secular confession.



A painting entitled *The Scapegoat* by **William Holman Hunt** (1854-5, *Manchester Art Gallery*) explores another solution to get rid of sin. The origin of the theme is found in the **Old Testament Book of Leviticus**, and the term is also used for the idea of blaming someone for the faults of others. Christians believe that Christ's death on the cross, as the ultimate scapegoat, atoned for humankind's sins once and for all.

*Youth*, 2009 (Courtesy the artist) a sculpture by **Ron Mueck**, invites us, on leaving the exhibition, to continue to reflect on the enduring nature of sin and on what sin and redemption mean in contemporary society. A young man lifts his T-shirt to examine a wound. It evokes the image of **Christ** showing his sacrificial wound. Is Youth another type of Christ? The work proposes a path of redemption that questions, disrupts and dismantles stereotypes and prejudices perpetuated by society's ongoing cycle of sin.

Sin will also include paintings by **Jan Gossaert, Jan Steen, Bronzino**, and the Gallery's recently acquired *Venus and Cupid* (1529) by **Lucas Cranach the Elder**.

**Dr Joost Joustra**, Howard and Roberta Ahmanson Research Curator, says: '*Sin invites visitors to reflect on a fundamental concept that pervades our lives and history, but also to marvel at the ingenious ways artists have addressed the subject across time.*'

**Dr Gabriele Finaldi**, Director of the National Gallery, said: "*Sin is a deadly serious subject and artists over the centuries have treated it with imagination and inventiveness. This small exhibition packs a big punch and will, I hope, lead to much discussion and reflection on the meaning and imagery of sin.*"

**Sin runs from 7 October 2020 - 3 January 2021 in the Ground Floor Galleries.**

**Admission free. For more information, visit: [www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk)**

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**And again - the amazing work of the SVP:**

**SVP 'RISE TO THE CHALLENGE**

**Julie Etchingam**



*The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)* is launching *Rise to the Challenge*, an innovative awareness-building campaign designed to help people better understand the work of the SVP, especially during the Covid-19 crisis, to raise funds to help those in most need and to encourage more people to join. Traditionally, the SVP runs an *Awareness Month programme every September* to coincide with the feast day of St Vincent de Paul on the 27th. This is usually a predominantly parish-focused activity. However, 2020 is not a usual year. Due to coronavirus, there are strict limitations on what can be done in parishes and fewer people are attending Mass in person with many opting to watch streaming services over the internet.

As a result, the SVP is launching *Rise to the Challenge*, focusing attention on the amazing and vital work of SVP members, staff and volunteers during the pandemic with thousands of hungry people fed and friendship and support offered to the lonely and isolated. The campaign aims to hit an initial target of £100,000 for the SVP's Covid-19 recovery programme.

The campaign invites people to show their support for the SVP in one of three ways:

- **Join the SVP either as a full or Temporary Auxiliary Member, helping with 'knock and drop' food deliveries, or as a volunteer at a St Vincent's Shop or St Vincent's Support Centre, doing their bit to help people in need during the crisis**
- **Take the fundraising challenge - raise £100, or any amount, to help pay for activities now and during the post-Covid economic recovery period**





- **Make a direct donation to the programme.**

Although people are being challenged to help in one of these ways, the SVP hopes many people will do all three.

ITV newscaster **Julie Etchingam**, whose father is an SVP member in her home parish in Leicester, is a patron of the *Rise to the Challenge* campaign. She says: *"I'm very proud to be patron of the SVP's Rise to the Challenge campaign. Growing up as Catholic, I've always known what extraordinary work its members do. Quietly, without fanfare, supporting families and individuals enduring the hardest of times.*

*"In a society suffering an epidemic of loneliness and deep-rooted poverty, the outstanding work of SVP members is needed more than ever. It might be in supporting someone who has just left prison, someone who's in debt or unemployed, a family in crisis due to ill health or bereavement, people for whatever reason feeling marginalised, disenfranchised, or simply lonely."*

Julie, an award-winning journalist and presenter of News at Ten, adds: *"I'm proud to support their life-giving work, and hope you will too as the SVP rises to the challenges of this next century."*

The SVP has provided materials and suggestions to take part in the Rise to the Challenge campaign.

**A web page: [www.svp.org.uk/rise](http://www.svp.org.uk/rise) suggests fun ways people can raise money.**

Here is a small selection of things people can do to help:

- **Donate your birthday - instead of getting presents ask family and friends to donate to the SVP Covid-19 Recovery Fund in your name.**
- **Organise a virtual pub quiz over Zoom - have each person pay £1 or £2 to enter and instead of a prize, the winner just gets glory and a round of applause**
- **Follow in the footsteps of Captain Tom - climb Mount Snowdon on your stairs, run a marathon in your back garden or walk the equivalent of Land's End to John O'Groats in your local street**

On the subject of the Covid-19 crisis, **Pope Francis** says:

*"The pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable and interconnected everyone is. If we do not take care of one another, starting with the least, with those who are most impacted, we cannot heal the world."*

Pope Francis points out that the pandemic has *"exposed the plight of the poor and the great inequality that reigns in the world"*, adding: *"The harmony created by God asks that we look at others, the needs of others, the problems of others, in communion."*

SVP National President **Helen O'Shea** comments: *"In a world facing not only the unprecedented crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also the ever present spectres of poverty, loneliness and inequality, it is easy to become downcast, but we must rise to the challenge. We must meet these challenges with compassion, friendship and understanding. "Our Rise to the Challenge campaign is raising awareness of the serious issues millions of people in the UK and across the world are facing today and in the future. Rise to the Challenge gives everyone in the UK the tools they need to help those in urgent need of practical support, friendship and understanding."*

She continues: *"Now is the time to 'Rise to the Challenge'. As our founder Blessed Frédéric Ozanam said, 'Let us do without hesitation whatever good lies at our hands'."*





For more information or to donate to the SVP's Rise to the Challenge campaign, go to [www.svp.org.uk/rise](http://www.svp.org.uk/rise)  
Twitter: @SVPEnglandWales (#SVPRiseChallenge) or telephone 020 7703 3030.

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## BIRMINGHAM: NATIONAL PRAYER MONUMENT GIVEN PLANNING CONSENT



Artist's drawing of the planned Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer

A new national landmark which aims to profile a million answered prayers has been given the go ahead to be built on a site near Coleshill on the outskirts of Birmingham. *The Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer*, which will eclipse the size of *the Angel of the North*, will stand at 169 feet and is expected to attract 300,000 visitors each year.

The iconic 'eternal' arch structure will be constructed using one million bricks with each representing individual prayers that have been answered for people across the country. In addition, using interactive technology and a bespoke app, visitors will be able to use their smart device, holding it against any brick to read the individual answered prayers and the personal stories behind them.

After North Warwickshire Borough Council granted planning permission, the Secretary of State ratified the decision, giving Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer **CEO Professor Rev Richard Gamble**, the green light to start the build. The theology professor and former Presbyterian chaplain of Leicester City Football Club is behind the project.

Gamble said: *"It's been 16 years since the idea was first born. To finally receive the official consent is incredible. We are building a very special landmark and it is an amazing opportunity for the British people to leave a legacy of hope for future generations. Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer will make hope visible to the UK. It is unique in that it is all about the community: it is crowd-funded and a million people will come together to crowd-create this incredible piece of art with their stories of hope. What we're doing is historic."*

It is anticipated that Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer will create 60 new jobs during its two year construction phase from 2021, thereafter providing 20 full-time positions for employees to work for the charity in the visitor centre, café, bookstore and a 24 hour on-site chaplaincy support service. It is also estimated that the monument will generate an additional gross social value of £1.4 billion, including £430 million in charitable donations.

Gamble continues, *"We want to celebrate and remember all the prayers that God has answered for individuals throughout our nation's history. Each answered prayer could provide hope to those who visit. Our desire is to create thought-provoking public art and offer a space for recreation and reflection for everyone. Our hope is that those who visit will see how God can bring peace in life's storms and be encouraged to reflect on the power and relevance of prayer."*

**Andy Street**, Mayor of the West Midlands and a member of the judging panel who decided on the design comments, *"I am delighted Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer has now finally got planning permission and work can get underway. It's an incredibly ambitious, stunning project and is a landmark for the Midlands. It has been a long process, but this landmark will serve as a place of hope for many, and one that will help us remember the Christian heritage of our nation. A massive thank you should go to everyone involved who has turned this vision into reality."*

Church leaders from the Catholic, Anglican and Baptist churches have backed the project:



Birmingham Archbishop **Bernard Longley** said: "Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer promises to be an exciting project. I hope that all those who visit it will find some space and inspiration to consider the value of prayer in their lives. The local Catholic community looks forward to playing its part in supporting this work so that together we can leave a legacy of faith for generations to come."

**The Revd Yinka Oyekan**, President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain: "Eternal Wall will be a permanent reminder of the power embedded in prayer, a power that produces an irrepressible hope enabling the scaling of any mountain. It will also be a lasting symbol of what faith can accomplish."

**The Right Reverend David Urquhart**, Anglican Bishop of Birmingham said: "I am excited about Eternal Wall and support it as an encouragement to personal and national prayer and to attract visitors for exploring the journey of faith."

Construction is expected to begin in Spring 2021 with completion in **Autumn 2022**.  
Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer is looking to gather one million answers to prayer.

Share yours by going to [www.eternalwall.org.uk/testimony](http://www.eternalwall.org.uk/testimony)

You can view the 3D visualisation for the Eternal Wall

here: <https://youtu.be/3YwTBkseflc>

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**BOOK: FIFTY CATHOLIC CHURCHES TO SEE BEFORE YOU DIE**

**Fifty Catholic Churches to See Before You Die by Elena Curti, Gracewing Press.**

Describing the architecture of *Westminster Cathedral*, the poet **John Betjeman** wrote of being "Surprised by Joy". **Elena Curti** has been surprised by the same joy as she recommends her favourite fifty churches to see before you die.

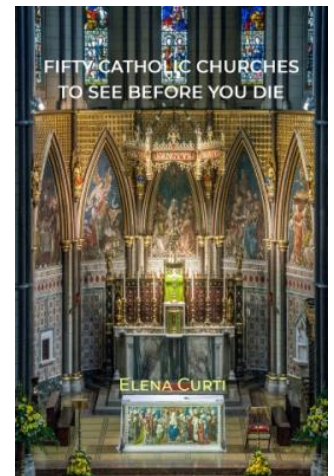
Readers will be moved by the history, the sacrifice, the architecture and artefacts contained within these sacred spaces. All who visit these churches, and all who read this seminal book, will surely be reminded of the words of TS Eliot on visiting the church in the Huntingdonshire village of Little Gidding:

You are not here to verify,  
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity,  
Or carry report. You are here to kneel  
Where prayer has been valid.  
(Little Gidding 1:43-46)

+George Stack Archbishop of Cardiff.

**Fifty Catholic Churches to See Before You Die - Publisher Gracewing Press - ISBN number: 978 085244 962 2. £14.99. The book can be ordered from [www.gracewing.co.uk](http://www.gracewing.co.uk) under 'New Arrivals'.**

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*We are very grateful to Penny Culliford for submitting her COVID Diary:*

I'm very much aware that we all have vastly different experiences of this pandemic and it is affecting us in different ways. Even during this terrible time, I feel blessed. I haven't contracted coronavirus and nor have my family. I have been in employment all the way through the pandemic in a job that has allowed me to work as part of a fantastic team to support the community. Others, I know, have not been so fortunate.

I work for a homelessness charity, the YMCA, and across our hostels, which have remained open and have not seen an outbreak, thank God, there has been plenty to do. The residents have been bored, and we have found new ways of keeping them occupied. We have arranged socially distanced events, such as barbecues, music, crafting and cake decorating.

I've learned new skills – van driving, Zoom mindfulness and box packing, along with how to socially distance in an elevator – but that's another story.

As a Chaplain I imagined I'd be there in some kind of spiritual capacity, dispensing tea, sage advice and prayer. That hasn't happened at all.

We were given a financial donation by a local building company and decided to use it to help people we knew in the community. We made up bags with toiletries and magazines for people recovering from cancer and strokes; we bought sweets and puzzles for people from our Senior Citizens' social club, and supported countless families who use our nursery schools and our youth club who we knew they would struggle for food. We worked with volunteer organisations to deliver, but just three of us went to supermarkets to buy the food and pack it. Tons of it. Over 6000 meals worth by the end. We delivered the first few boxes ourselves too with tinned and dried food and a few treats. One lady opened the door to me and cried, because she had no food, a child with health problems and didn't dare to go out. She wasn't the only one. Over the weeks, we've got quite used to making people cry.



I could also share stories of birth and death, trying to find furniture for a young, pregnant woman who suddenly gets her own (unfurnished) flat during lockdown and all the charity shops are closed, to supporting the lady suddenly widowed and devastated because she can't attend her late husband's funeral. Through it all, the local churches have been a fantastic support, both spiritually with prayer, and practically with furniture and baby items.

So, I've had an unusual COVID-19 experience. And still it goes on. I haven't had a chance yet to reflect as it's all going so fast. My prayers have been simple. Keep us safe and teach us to love each other.

**Penny Culliford**

YMCA Chaplain



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## UK VIEWPOINT: LET'S NOT FORGET THOSE WHO HAVE DIED OF COVID

More people have died in the UK in the last six months from Covid than died in the Blitz.

So far, officially, nearly 42,000 people have lost their lives here. They includes my neighbour Dave, my cousin Marek who was a doctor - and nine people in a care home a few streets away from me. They went very quietly. No one was able to visit them in hospital. There were no wakes. Marek had a 15-minute online funeral. Dave had a short open-air service with just a few people present. People are fading away and we're not noticing.

Isn't it time we were all a bit more concerned about this? Would it help if we were told people's names instead of just numbers?

In Cyprus, the names of people who have died of Covid are published and read out on the media every day.

In Italy, the names of those who have died of Covid are published daily - people in some places also put up photographs of their deceased loved ones in front of churches and town halls, lay flowers and play music..

Italy observed a national day of mourning in March - for the more than 12,000 who had died by that time - with prayers and ceremonies.

In Spain on 26 May, the government declared a 10-day period of national mourning for the more than 27,000 people who had died with the coronavirus - the longest official mourning period in the country's democratic history. Flags were hung at half-mast in more than 14,000 public buildings across the nation and on Spanish naval vessels. King Felipe VI presided over a solemn memorial ceremony.

Last month in China, **President Xi Jinping** led a nationwide day of mourning.

Kazakhstan held a *National Day of Mourning For COVID-19 Victims* on 13 July.

What have we done in the UK to honour our dead and express our collective grief?

On 28 April Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** called a one minute's silence to honour health staff who have died during the coronavirus outbreak. Was that really enough?

According to the *Marie Curie* charity, more than one million people have been bereaved since the UK lockdown began, whether as a result of coronavirus or another cause.

Losing someone you love really hurts. In times of grief and loss, having your friends and family around you is a huge source of comfort. But right now, even the smallest of gestures, like giving someone a hug, are impossible.

We need a time together - whether in person or virtually - to pray for, remember and celebrate the lives of the people who've died. Those who are bereaved need comforting.

**Pope Francis** led by example with his Masses and prayers throughout the lockdown in Italy, and his very moving *Urbi et Orbi* message from an empty St Peter's Square.

**Pope delivers special Urbi et Orbi message in a deserted rainy St**

**Peter's Square –**

The *Marie Curie* charity is calling for the UK Government to recognise this tragic loss with a national day to unite in memory.

See: [www.mariecurie.org.uk/who/day-to-reflect](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/who/day-to-reflect) #UnitelnMemory







St Paul's Cathedral has a website: *Remember Me* - where people of all faiths and none are invited to publish a picture of a loved one who has died with a short tribute. See: [www.indcatholicnews.com/search/Remember%20Me](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/search/Remember%20Me)

I would love to see the Catholic Church in the UK organise some collective activity or event for those who have died in this pandemic and their families and loved ones. A special national Requiem Mass each month? A space on diocesan websites for names of those who have died? Special prayers throughout the month of November, when we traditionally pray for the dead anyway? A support line for bereaved people and anyone shielding at home?

Many of our parishioners have lost family members overseas and have not been able to attend their funerals. As well as offering comfort to the bereaved, some public events like this might encourage people to be more careful and observe safety measures to protect us from more deaths.

Until a vaccine or effective treatment has been found, we are not living in 'normal' times and we've got to stop trying to pretend that we are.

**Remember Me:** [www.indcatholicnews.com/search/Remember%20Me](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/search/Remember%20Me)

**Marie Curie Day to Reflect** - [www.mariecurie.org.uk/who/day-to-reflect](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/who/day-to-reflect)

**USA: Funeral Ministry in a time of Covid-19** - [www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39463](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39463)

**Pope's special Urbi et Orbi blessing** - [www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39230](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39230)



**Comments:**

Thank you for highlighting this issue. Working as a nurse in the NHS I am often shocked when I meet people who still aren't taking this pandemic seriously. Covid is a dangerous virus and I have seen patients who have survived but have been left with serious health problems. I do also think it is tragic that so many people have died without their loved ones around them - and then not been given proper funerals. I am sure many people in the future will suffer from depression and unresolved grief because of this. I really hope the churches in the UK will organise a national day to honour and pray for everyone who has died this year.

**John Lloyd, Birmingham**

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We would like to congratulate our member **Jimena Larraguivel** who has announced she is expecting. Huge congratulations! – and huge thanks too, as Jimena has been revamping the CaAPA website. We hope all will go well during her pregnancy.

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All our future events are, of course, subject to the government's Covid restrictions. We still hope to hold a **CaAPA dinner** and our annual **Playlets evening** when safe to do so. Our CaAPA Carol Concert will, unfortunately and predictably, be missed this year.

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If any member would be interested in joining a **Zoom playreading group**, that meets fortnightly on Thursday evenings, please email me ([Kennethmichaels@hotmail.com](mailto:Kennethmichaels@hotmail.com)). You can join either as a reader or observer.

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# Catholic Association of Performing Arts

A reminder that archive copies of the Newsletter are available on the CaAPA website Members' area. You can access this only if you have a login and password. Do set up an account next time you visit if you haven't already registered.

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Lastly, please do send in any items you have written, or may be of interest to members, for inclusion in future Newsletters to [kennethmichaels@hotmail.com](mailto:kennethmichaels@hotmail.com)  
Feel free to send us any accompanying photos too!

Until next month stay safe and God Bless,

**Kenneth Michaels**  
**(Hon.Secretary).**

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*Our diverse group of members, whom are comprised of actors, directors, writers, singers, musicians and other entertainers, share in a creative community where they can also grow in their spiritual values. We also aim to serve the wider community by presenting productions for charitable causes or by taking productions on tour to schools, local theatres, parishes and elderly*