

THE WEAVINGS

Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Department for Spirituality

September 2019

The God who speaks...

At the end of the month, we have the feast day of St Jerome. He was born around 347AD and died on 30 September 420. He followed a fairly conventional path for a fairly wealthy young man of the time —studying but also involved in less savoury pursuits which left him feeling guilty!



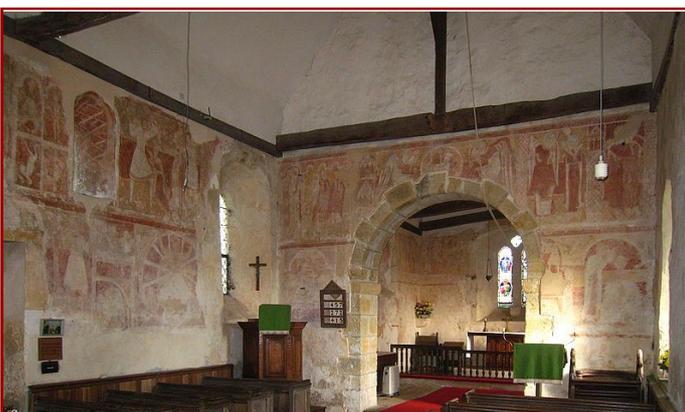
In time, he converted to Christianity and lived as a hermit. He is sometimes depicted with a lion as he is said to have tamed one by healing its paw.

Although he lived a simple, austere life, he had a patroness who ensured he had enough to eat but also had access to books—particularly the Scriptures.

Jerome was responsible for the translation of much of the Bible into the language of the ordinary people—Latin. His translation is called the Vulgate and it was used as a standard for the Catholic Church for centuries. What made his stand out was that he did not rely just on the Greek texts but, with the help of a Jewish convert, went back to the original Hebrew for the Psalms and Old Testament.

Jerome's translation reminds us that, from the earliest days of Christianity, Church leaders tried to make the Scriptures accessible to ordinary people. They are at the heart of our faith. As most people were not literate, other ways were found to help them to learn about the Bible.

Churches would often be decorated with mosaics or wall-paintings. Unfortunately, the Reformation saw many of these whitewashed over in this country but some have been rediscovered.



St Botolph's church, Hardham, West Sussex, England. Interior looking east, showing some of the 12th century wall paintings

In other places—usually cathedrals as they were so expensive—stained-glass windows were created. Over the weeks, months and years of visiting the churches, the stories they depicted would have become familiar and gazing on them a prayer in itself.



Marriage Feast at Cana, Chartres Cathedral (*Wiki Commons*)

Another way in which people learned about the Bible was in the Mystery Plays. They were held in several cities around the country and took the Scriptures out into the streets. This tradition has been resurrected in many places and there are plans for a major “street theatre” production of the Passion in Bishop Auckland in 2020.

As we look ahead to the Year of the Word—The God who speaks, it is useful to look back into our tradition and see how varied and vibrant the ways of sharing the Bible with people have been. We do need to give God time to speak to us personally—but that does not mean limiting ourselves to reading but, perhaps, ‘listening’ through our eyes and ears—and, above all, hearts and minds, to the God who speaks to us individually and collectively in all kinds of ways. 

Advent Resources

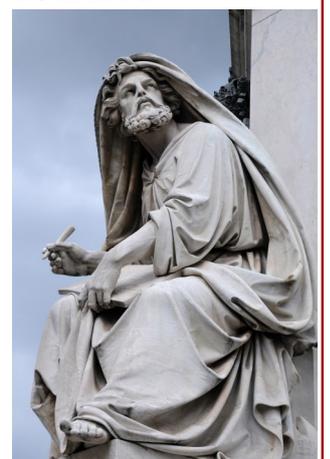
Our resources for Advent will be available later this month.

Our theme will be:

**The God who speaks—
through the Prophets.**

Our main guide will be Isaiah—depicted here in as statue by Revelli in Rome. This seems to capture Isaiah's attentiveness to the voice of ‘The God who speaks’—and his willingness to record it for posterity.

Contact us for more details.



Contact Details

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Upcoming Events in the Diocese and Local Centres

Oak Lea Centre

The Mercy Centre for Prayer and Mission has sadly closed, but Sr Michael will be operating from the Oak Lea Centre, Convent of Mercy, Sunderland.

Saturday 28 September;

A Day on St Therese.

Fr Stephen Watson will be facilitating this special day which is being held to mark the 10th anniversary of the visit of St Therese's relics to Newcastle. The day will include a talk, veneration of a relic, adoration and Mass. 10.00am - 3.00pm

Saturday 12 October;

Craft Day on Stained Glass

Rita Griskonyte, a stained glass artist, will be showing us how to make angels, star and jewellery from off cuts of stained glass.

10.00am - 3.00pm

Save the Date

St Mary's Cathedral Newcastle, 14 - 16 October

On March 25th 2020, England is going to be re-dedicated as the Dowry of Mary, an ancient medieval title. The first dedication of England as the Dowry of Mary was in 1381 by Richard II. The original statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, from England's national shrine, is being taken on pilgrimage from the Slipper Chapel, Walsingham to all the Cathedrals of England and Wales as part of the spiritual preparation for this event.

*For further information or to book please contact
Sr Michael on 0191 567 4653 |
marymichael.lee7@googlemail.com*

Ushaw College

Saturday 21 September;

The Heart of Prayer: An Introductory Day on Centring Prayer

Elizabeth Smith, B.Ed, has given numerous retreats and workshops on 'Centring Prayer', sharing the teaching of Fr Thomas Keating. Keating was Elizabeth's mentor and friend, and with his blessing and support, Elizabeth founded Contemplative outreach UK in 1989.

The cost of this day is £10 per person, which includes tea/coffee in the morning and in the afternoon. Light meals can be purchased separately in The Refectory. Booking for this event is essential.

*For further information or to book please contact
Ushaw College
0191 334 5119 | meet@ushaw.org*

Minsteracres

Saturday 7 September;

Walking Retreat.

Enjoy a walk of 7 - 10 miles through the beautiful countryside around Minsteracres, with time for prayer, reflection and sharing of the beauty of creation.

10.00am - 5.00pm

Wednesday 11 September;

Day of Prayer.

Experience different ways of praying, along with time for quiet, personal prayer. This day of prayer will be led by Sr Rosarie Spence RSM,

10.00am - 4.00pm.

Friday 13 (7.00pm) - Sunday 15 September (2.00pm);

'Daring Disciples' Themed Retreat.

A weekend of prayer, reflection and nourishment on our life's journey, led by the Minsteracres team. This weekend is open to groups from Partnerships and parishes as well as individuals.

Monday 16 (12.00pm) - Friday 20 September (10.00am);

Love and Suffering - exploring the Memory of the Passion.

A theological seminar exploring the heart of the Passionist Charism from several perspectives. The seminar will have a variety of perspectives.

Friday 27 (7.00pm) - Sunday 29 September (2.00pm);

The Way of the Embodied Contemplative

A weekend to explore how the practice of meditation can also be encountered through the language of the body using breathing exercises and slow Tai Chi movements. This weekend will be led by Terry Doyle and it is suitable for all ages and abilities.

*For further information or to book please contact
Minsteracres Retreat Centre
01434 673248 | info@minsteracres.org*

As we begin preparations for the Year of the Word, why not take some time each day to reflect on the readings of the day? The Department for Spirituality produce daily reflections that are emailed out every day.

If you wish to receive our daily reflection, please contact the Department at spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk

It is also possible to receive the reflections in monthly batches for distribution at Sunday Mass, or for Readers and other to use as preparation for their liturgical ministries. If you wish to receive a monthly set of daily reflections, please contact the same email address for more information.