



RAF ROMAN CATHOLIC ADVENT 2023 UPDATE

Newsletter No. 7



Welcome to the latest update for the RAF Roman Catholic Community. I am writing this as we enter the season of Advent in the Christian calendar. Advent anticipates the coming of Christ, not just the physical nativity in Bethlehem, but also the reception of him into the heart of the believer. I pray that both you and your loved ones will have a very happy and holy Christmas.

I hope that you find the newsletter informative. We look back at another busy year of activity. We have a lot planned for next year; please join with one of the many events - it would be great to see you.

This Advent may we remember in prayer all members of the RAF on deployment or about to deploy.

Rev (Sqn Ldr) Deacon Dave Skillen, RAF Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (PRCC)



There are many prayer resources available on-line to help with your Advent journey. Sign up to CAFOD's (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) Advent reflections straight to your inbox [here](#).



World Youth Day (WYD) is a global gathering where young people deepen their faith, experience the universality of the Catholic Church, and commit their lives to Christ alongside hundreds of thousands of like-minded peers.

WYD 2023 took place in Lisbon in Portugal in August. A group of 10 personnel from the Whole Force joined with the Bishop of the Armed Forces, Bishop Paul Mason, Fr Ian Stevenson (Army PRCC), the Holy Father, Pope Francis, and over 1 million other pilgrims for this week-long event. The memories of those who attended will live long in the memory.

The next WYD takes place in Seoul, South Korea in 2027; we hope to have an Armed Forces group attend. For more information click [here](#).

The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23

Throughout the year there has been a Fruits of the Spirit online Bible study course. Thanks to all who took part and especially to Padre Ashley Mitchell and his wife, Fliss, for leading the course.

International Military Pilgrimage (IMP) to Lourdes, France

The 63rd IMP took place in May with a large RAF contingent joining with Bishop Paul, the RAF Chaplain-in-Chief, the RAF PRCC, and pilgrims from throughout the world. This is always a very special event, one you should try and attend at least once during your service career.



Upcoming Events

HCPT – The Hosanna House & Children's Pilgrimage Trust Pilgrimage to Lourdes 30 Mar to 6 Apr 24.



RAF Group 187 enjoyed a return to Lourdes at Easter providing a life-changing pilgrimage holiday for children with disabilities or disadvantages. For more information on HCPT check this [link](#). In 2024 the pilgrimage dates are 30 Mar to 6 Apr.

RAF Group 187 welcomes regular and reservist Aviators of all ranks and trades, as well as members of the Whole Force community such as civil servants, dependents, and civilians with a strong connection to the RAF to volunteer their time as helpers. For further information please contact the HCPT Armed Forces lead at armedforces@hcpt.org.uk

Bishopric of the Forces Retreats 2024

The ever-popular retreat series offered by the Bishopric of the Forces returns in 2024. This year 4 opportunities are offered:

- **Kinnoull, Perthshire 29 Apr to 2 May**
- **Douai Abbey, Berkshire 25 to 28 June**
- **Worth Abbey, West Sussex 14 to 17 Oct**
- **Ampleforth Abbey, Nth Yorks 11 to 14 Nov**

The DIN, which provides more information and includes the application form, should be available soon.

64th International Military Pilgrimage (IMP) to Lourdes 23 to 27 May 2024

Join with military forces from over 40 nations at a pilgrimage like no other. The IMP started in 1958 when the French Armed Forces invited the German military to join them in Lourdes as a gesture of post-war reconciliation. The British contingent will, once again, travel with Tangney Tours. Serving personnel will be eligible for a subsidy towards costs. More information, the IMP DIN, and the ability to make an on-line booking to attend will be released in due course. In the meantime, save the date.

Catholic Military Connect App



Catholic Military Connect is a free app which has been produced with input from the Bishopric of the Armed Forces. The app contains loads of answers about God, faith and the Catholic Church along with other prayer and spiritual resources. The app is available to download from your App Store. Highly recommended.

And finally...

If you would like to know more about or take part in any of the events mentioned in this newsletter, or about Catholic life in the RAF, or should you wish to be added to our database and receive future updates, get in touch with Wg Cdr (rtd) Jem Wynne, Pastoral Administrative Assistant to the RAF PRCC. Contact the RAF Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain, Padre Dave Skillen, to say hello, request prayers, or to know more about Catholic life in the RAF

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Check out the Bishopric of the Forces [Website](#) for news and information.

