



CATHOLIC HERALD
**UK CATHOLIC
LEADERS**
2022



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Catholic Theology in the Public Academy

Introduction

This year's *Herald* survey of the UK's most influential Catholic leaders shows how philanthropists and the laity are shaping Catholicism in the wider community. By **Olenka Hamilton** and **William Cash**

Once again, our editorial team and advisory board have got together to produce the *Herald's* annual UK Catholic Leaders of Today special report. Our criteria, as with previous years, has been "broad church". Many use their position to do good by example, through philanthropy or by shaping society at community level or through the arts; John Studzinski's Genesis Foundation is a notable example. Even if they don't all openly identify as Catholics – and not all are public saints – their lives have invariably been shaped by their Catholic background and faith.

This year we have focused on education, business and philanthropy, law and politics, media, charity, and arts and letters. We have included Lord Spencer of Alresford whose £6.25 million Spencer Building opened at Worth School in April. This cutting-edge building incorporates a new school library, an auditorium and spaces for sixth-form pupils to come together socially, spiritually and intellectually in a pre-university experience.

Other impressive figures include Graham Hutton, whose work with the Order of Malta's religious care homes deserves special praise, and the Brenninkmeyer family whose philanthropic "mission, vision and values are inspired by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching", in their own words. As with our recent American top 250 Catholic influencers report, what is clear is that Catholic leadership in the UK is increasingly falling to the laity, not least to members of lay religious orders. Stefan Kaminski, featured in our new Under 40 section, is director of the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst, which runs the innovative Christian Leadership Formation programme for students. He has restored historic buildings in the grounds of Stonyhurst College to promote education, formation, and preparing young Catholics for public lives of purpose. A patron of this retreat centre is Ilyas Khan, one of Britain's leading computer-science entrepreneurs whom we interview about the importance of Catholic business leaders in the public square.

We feature politicians and media figures across the political spectrum, from pro-life campaigner and long-standing cross-bench peer Lord Alton to Labour MP Mike Kane (a new addition), who proposed the Amess amendment in parliament to ensure access for Catholic priests to administer the last rites at crime scenes. New additions to our media section are former barrister Laura Perrins, who co-edits *The Conservative Woman*, and theologian Gavin Ashenden, a former Anglican priest, who presents *Merely Catholic*, the *Herald's* acclaimed podcast.

Inspirational figures from the charity sector are Raymond Friel, prolific author of books on Catholic education and the new(ish) chief executive of Caritas, and Peter Hugh Smith, one of our Catholics of the Year. He is the CEO of investment management company CCLA, the UK's largest charity fund manager, working with charities, religious organisations and individuals to achieve sustainable returns aligned with their values. We are grateful to CCLA for their continued support and for sponsoring this special report.

Finally, we have a mix of other notable names ranging from former MP Rob Ffello, who is now chairman of the Catholic Union of Great Britain, to Fra Max Rumney, the Order of Malta's new Grand Prior of England. Certain families have multigenerational appearances, such as Orlando Fraser, the new chairman of the Charities Commission appearing alongside his mother Lady Antonia Fraser; and Ed West alongside his mother Mary Kenny.

Finally, we were delighted to interview former chatelaine of Downing Street Cherie Blair about her faith and how her husband Tony Blair was an honorary Catholic during his time in office. We learn that the infamous remark by former spin doctor Alastair Campbell – "We don't do God" – was in fact far from the truth. Everyone on the list demonstrates again that at a time when public life has become increasingly secularised, religion still has a major role to play in British life. **CH**

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"Our Lord does not look so much as the greatness of our actions, but at the love at which we do them."
St Therese

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CH NOVEMBER 2022

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Education

Paul Barber
Director,
Catholic Education Service

Former barrister Paul Barber was director of education for the Diocese of Westminster before taking over as director of the CES in 2013. A graduate of Jesus College, Cambridge, he has an MA in Canon Law, is a Judge of the Southwark Metropolitan Tribunal and a governor at St Mary's University, Twickenham. He has used his position of prominence to reject the notion that faith schools segregate populations.

John Browne
Headmaster,
Stonyhurst College

Founded in 1593, Stonyhurst is the oldest continuously active Jesuit school in the world, counting three saints, 12 beati and seven archbishops among its alumni. With over 800 pupils, it continues to thrive under the stewardship of Bristol music graduate John Browne, who was appointed in 2016.

Stephen Bullivant
Senior lecturer, St Mary's
University, Twickenham

Dr Stephen Bullivant has been a lecturer in theology in British academia for almost a decade. He serves as director of the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society. His research focuses on the study of non-belief and atheism and the enduring relevance of Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*; he is the author of *Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation since Vatican II* (OUP, 2019).

Eamon Duffy
Professor of the History of
Christianity, University of
Cambridge

Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Cambridge, Prof Duffy specialises in the 15th-17th century religious history of Britain and is a former member of the Pontifical Historical Commission. A prolific author and broadcaster, his work, including his famous book *The Stripping of the Altars*, has done much to overturn the popular image of late-medieval Catholicism as being in terminal decline, and instead presents it as a vibrant cultural force.

John Haldane
Philosopher and author

A Scottish philosopher, commentator and broadcaster, Prof Haldane specialises in 20th-century philosophy and is credited with coining the term "Analytical Thomism". He is a former consultant to the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture and was chairman of the Royal Institute of Philosophy.

Andrew Hobbs
Headmaster,
Downside School

Andrew Hobbs is a rugby blue who read Classics at Magdalene College, Cambridge; he was educated at Worth School. Appointed as headmaster of Downside in 2018 following a challenging period for the school, he oversaw the last monks of Downside leaving for Buckfast Abbey. His wife Damaris works in the NHS as a physiotherapist and they have four children.

Michael Hurley
Professor of Literature and
Theology, University of
Cambridge

Appointed CBE in 2014 and the recipient of a MacArthur "Genius" grant, Michael Hurley is Professor of Literature and Theology at the University of Cambridge, and a fellow and director of studies in English at Trinity College. He was educated at Stonyhurst, Cambridge and St Andrews. He is a trustee of the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst, which "exists to offer a deeper spiritual and intellectual engagement with the Christian faith". He frequently gives talks and public lectures on the philosophical and theological questions posed by art and literature.

David Albert Jones
Director, Anscombe
Bioethics Centre

Prof Jones is a director at the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, Oxford, which is the national research centre in bioethics for the Catholic Church. Also a research fellow at Blackfriars, Oxford and at St Mary's, Twickenham, he is regularly called on to give evidence at parliamentary committees and other regulatory bodies.

Ruth Kelly
Director, Anscombe
Bioethics Centre

Former cabinet minister and Labour MP Ruth Kelly has been a defender of Catholic positions on issues such as abortion in public affairs throughout her career. Despite her time at the forefront of

New Labour, she is now involved with the centre-right Policy Exchange think tank. A member of Opus Dei, she assists the Vatican council with its finances after an appointment by Pope Francis.

Anthony McClaran
Vice-Chancellor, St Mary's
University, Twickenham

Anthony McClaran has been chief executive of UCAS and of the UK Quality Assurance Association, among other high-level roles. He is the third vice-chancellor of St Mary's University, having taken up the post in April 2020.

Stuart McPherson
Headmaster, Worth School

Australian Stuart McPherson was a housemaster at Eton College before taking over as head of Worth, one of the most successful Catholic schools in the UK today. His tenure has been judged as a great success so far, especially by Catholic parents who admire his enthusiasm in upholding the school's Benedictine ethos and monastic traditions. His wife, Johnneen McPherson, is headmistress of the Catholic St Catherine's School, Twickenham.

Lord Patten of Barnes
Chancellor,
University of Oxford

Born to an Irish Catholic family in London, Chris Patten was elected as the Conservative MP for Bath in 1979. He served as the last governor of Hong Kong from 1992 to 1997, when the territory was handed to China. In 2003, he was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford. In 2014, Cardinal Pell asked Patten to coordinate the reform of the Vatican's media operations. Patten also led the organisation of Benedict XVI's visit to the United Kingdom in 2010. Recently, he has been firmly critical of the Vatican's deal with Beijing.



Arts & Letters

Adam Dant
Painter

Jerwood Prize winner Adam Dant's work has earned him comparisons to Hogarth. He is known for his elaborate and intricate drawings, which frequently include maps and pictorial social commentaries. He was the official artist of the UK's 2015 general election and his work has been displayed in the V&A, London and MoMA in New York.

Lord Fellowes
Screenwriter

Julian Fellowes is the author of novels including *Belgravia* and *Snobs*, and the screenplay for *Gosford Park*. He wrote and produced *Downton Abbey*, which won him a Primetime Emmy. He attends the Traditional Latin Mass.

Gabriele Finaldi
Director, National Gallery

Gabriele Finaldi was born in London to an Italian father and a half-Polish, half-English mother. A former director of the Prado in Madrid, he was made director of the National Gallery in London in 2015. He has said his faith gives him "a sense of the sacramental nature of imagery". He is raising his six children as Catholics.

Pierpaolo Finaldi
CEO, Catholic Truth Society

Pierpaolo Finaldi starting working for the Catholic Truth Society in the

Clockwise from top: Sir James MacMillan, Ruth Kelly, Chris Patten, Stuart McPherson, Pierpaolo Finaldi

1990s, helping to relaunch it after a quiet period. He left for a brief stint to teach Christology and train RE teachers for the Archdiocese of Southwark, before returning to CTS as chief executive. Traditionally set up as a Victorian pamphleteering society, CTS now publishes a range of religious literature. A father of seven, he is passionate about passing on the faith to children and has written a number of books to this end, including *My Simple Prayer Book*.

Sir Stephen Hough
Pianist

The recipient of a MacArthur "genius grant", Stephen Hough is one of the world's leading concert pianists, as well as a renowned composer, writer and painter. A convert at 19, he once thought about becoming a Franciscan friar.

Sir James MacMillan
Composer

Originally from Cumnock, Ayrshire, classical composer and conductor James MacMillan returns there to organise an annual music festival. His music is a fusion of influences from his Scottish heritage, Catholic faith, social conscience, and close connection with Celtic folk music. He was chosen to write a piece for Pope Benedict XVI's UK visit in 2010, and (with his wife, Lynne) is a lay Dominican.

John Martin Robinson
Architectural historian

A consultant on many important restoration projects throughout his career, including the

conservation of the Ashmolean Museum, Covent Garden and Christ Church, Spitalfields, John Martin Robinson has always been an outspoken conservative voice in a trade dominated by modernism. He is chairman of the art and architecture committee of Westminster Cathedral and has overseen the completion of the mosaics in St George's and St Joseph's chapels, the Vaughan Chantry and several individual panels. He has been an architectural writer for *Country Life* for over 40 years. An officer of arms, in 1978 he was appointed librarian to the Duke of Norfolk Earl Marshal

Philip Mould
Art dealer, TV presenter

Philip Mould is considered to be the world's leading expert on British portraiture and has been art adviser to the Palace of Westminster for 20 years. He presents BBC One's *Fake or Fortune?* with Fiona Bruce. He has uncovered some of Gainsborough's earliest known pieces and lost Van Dycks. He is also the president of the wild plant conservation charity Plant Life.

The Earl & Countess of Oxford & Asquith
Author and scholar; diplomat and parliamentarian

Clare Asquith's 2005 work *Shadowplay: the Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare* was one of the first to posit that Shakespeare was a covert Catholic whose work is steeped in political commentary. Deemed radical at the time of publication, the book focuses on the playwright's early epic poem "The Rape of Lucrece", which, she says, is neither a poem nor about

From top: Lord Fellowes, Antonia Fraser, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Delia Smith, Philip Mould



the rape of a Roman noblewoman, but rather a political pamphlet decrying the country's Catholics. Her husband, Raymond, served as a career diplomat and then as MI6 station commander in Moscow. He sits in the House of Lords.

Frank Cottrell-Boyce
Children's author and screenwriter

Frank Cottrell-Boyce credits his local church and cinema while growing up in Liverpool with making him the man he is today. In 2010, he compered the Hyde Park prayer vigil during Pope Benedict XVI's UK visit. Cottrell-Boyce is the author of multiple books for children and the creator of films such as *Millions*, an accessible family film with a Catholic moral message. In May 2022 he revealed to the *Catholic Herald* that he had been moved by the Marian devotion of his mother.

Peter Frankopan
Historian

Born to a Croatian father and Swedish mother, Peter Frankopan is Professor of Global History at Oxford, specialising in Byzantine History. He is the author of *The Silk Roads* books.

Lady Antonia Fraser & Orlando Fraser
Historian and barrister

Biographer, historian and detective novelist Antonia Fraser was born into a Protestant family who converted to Catholicism in the 1950s; she is the daughter of Frank Longford, the prison reformer. Her book *Marie Antoinette* was made into Sofia Coppola's 2006 film of the same name; she was appointed DBE in 2011 and made a Companion of Honour in 2018. Her son, Orlando Fraser, a barrister, became the new head of the governmental Charity Commission in April this year.

Nigel Newton
Chief executive, Bloomsbury Publishing

Born in San Francisco to an English father and an American mother, Nigel Newton founded Bloomsbury Publishing in 1986 after working for Macmillan. The publisher gained rapid growth attributable to the Harry Potter series. He is a member of the lay community at Worth Abbey and a trustee of the Catholic Trust for England and Wales.

Piers Paul Read
Historian and novelist

Piers Paul Reid is the author of multiple acclaimed novels, biographies, histories and journalism, notably *Alive*, his account of the Uruguayan rugby team whose plane crashed in the Andes in 1972. He has served on the boards of many Catholic charities and is a former master of the Catholic Writers' Guild.

Delia Smith
Television chef

A convert in her early twenties, Delia Smith is best known for her world-famous cookery programmes and cookery books. She is on the board of directors of Norwich City Football Club. Smith is an outspoken Catholic and has criticised the dominance of atheism and secularism in the public forum. She was made a Companion of Honour in 2017.

Alexander Waugh
Author and historian

Alexander Waugh is a writer and journalist; he is the author of *God: The Biography*. He is president of the De Vere Society, which seeks to substantiate the theory that the 17th Earl of Oxford was the author of Shakespeare's works. He was the chief opera critic of the *Evening Standard* for most of the 1990s.

Business & Philanthropy

Lord Bamford
Chairman, JCB

Billionaire industrialist Anthony Bamford runs the family construction business, which employs around 10,000 people. A generous donor to Catholic causes, he funded the construction of the multimillion-pound Bamford Centre for science at his alma mater, Ampleforth College. He was a financial contributor to Pope Benedict XVI's 2010 visit to the UK.

Stephen & Mark Brenninkmeijer
Philanthropists

The German-Dutch Brenninkmeijer family owns Cofra Holding AG which, based in Switzerland, controls the C&A fashion business, a private equity company, a real estate fund and two banks. Stephen and Mark Brenninkmeijer run Porticus, a philanthropic trust, which helps over 2,000 charities and causes, and states that its "mission, vision and values are inspired by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching."

From left: Lord Bamford, Sir Lezek Borysiewicz, Declan Ganley, Denise Coates



Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz
Immunologist and chair of trustees, Cancer Research UK

A former vice-chancellor of Cambridge University, professor, immunologist and scientific administrator Leszek Borysiewicz was knighted in 2001 for his work researching vaccines, including the cervical cancer vaccine. He was chief executive of the Medical Research Council of the UK from 2007-2010. Borysiewicz was born in Wales to Polish parents who came over with the Anders' Army in the Second World War. He has questioned the Church's opposition to experimentation on hybrid embryos.

Peter & Denise Coates
Chief Executive, Bet365

Peter Coates co-founded the successful online betting company Bet365, which he runs with his children John and Denise. He is chairman of Stoke City Football Club. The son of a war-veteran Catholic miner, Coates is a devoted philanthropist; he has given to the Labour Party, as well as to CAFOD and St Joseph's College Trent



Vale, among others. His daughter Denise is the chief executive and majority shareholder of Bet365, and since 2012 has donated to various charitable causes through the Denise Coates Foundation.

Sir Tom Farmer
Founder, KwikFit

Scottish entrepreneur Sir Tom Farmer founded KwikFit in 1971, growing the company to become the largest tyre retailer in the world. He is a philanthropist and generous donor to causes in his hometown and a recipient of the Andrew Carnegie Medal for philanthropy. He was made a Knight of St Gregory by Pope John Paul II.

Sir Rocco Forte
Hotelier and philanthropist

Sir Rocco Forte is chairman of the Rocco Forte Hotels corporation and a long-standing co-owner of the *Catholic Herald*.

Declan Ganley
Telecommunications entrepreneur and activist

Born to Irish parents in Hertfordshire, Declan Ganley made his money in the forestry

industry in the early Russian Federation of the 1990s, before moving to the telecommunications industry. He is now CEO of Rivada Networks, which provides the US military, police and emergency services with equipment. Ganley is an outspoken pro-life activist in Ireland.

Graham Hutton
Business leader and philanthropist

Graham Hutton is co-founder of private equity firm Hutton Collins Partners which owns a stake in the Byron burger chain. A generous donor to Catholic causes, he is a chair of Aid to the Church in Need and a trustee of the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst College.

John Griffin
Founder, Addison Lee

John Griffin started out driving taxis before setting up his own minicab business. In the 1970s he founded Addison Lee, which today carries out over 20,000 jobs a day with revenues of £900 million a year. He is an Enterprise Fellow of the Prince's Trust. He stepped down as chair of Addison Lee in 2014.



GETTY IMAGES



Tom Hall
Global head of philanthropy,
UBS

Joining UBS in 2013, Tom Hall leads the firm's global philanthropy services for private clients.

Jean-Christophe Iseux
Diplomat

Jean-Christophe Iseux, Baron von Pftetten zu St Mariakirchen, is a diplomat, academic and landowner who lives at Apethorpe Palace in Northamptonshire. He served as a specially invited member of the upper house of the Chinese parliament between 2001-2012, the first European to hold such a position in China. Pftetten also hosted a series of meetings on Iran's nuclear programme attended by military commanders from Iran and Israel as well as senior officials from the P5 nations which contributed to the success of the Nuclear Interim Deal achieved in Geneva in November 2013. Pftetten was named a "global leader of tomorrow" by the World Economic Forum. He also received the Lei Feng award for merit for his humanitarian work following the 1997 earthquake and 1998 flood in China, the first and only foreigner to receive it.

Luke Johnson
Philanthropist

Luke Johnson is a leading British entrepreneur and chairman of private equity house Risk Capital Partners. He studied medicine



at Oxford and is chairman of the Institute of Cancer Research. He co-founded the Centre for Entrepreneurs, a non-profit think tank. Since 2016, Johnson has been chairman of the Almeida Theatre. He writes a column on business for the *Sunday Times*.

Sir Terry Leahy
Businessman

CEO of Tesco until 2011, Leahy transformed the company to be the third largest retailer in the world. He has since switched his focus to start-ups, making investments in the education sector and the performing arts. Born in Liverpool to Irish immigrant parents, he was knighted in 2002.

Roger Orf
Business leader and
philanthropist

Roger Orf is an American financier specialising in real estate. Since moving to the UK with Goldman Sachs in 1991, he has pursued an entrepreneurial career, which peaked with the founding of E-Shelter GmbH, a German-based data centre business which he and his partners sold for €1.1 billion to NTT. He is a trustee of the Centre for Policy Studies and serves on the board of the Urban Land Institute.

Oliver Pawle
Chairman, Korn Ferry
and philanthropist

Oliver Pawle is the London-based



chairman of Korn Ferry Board Services Practice, focusing on chairman, non-executive and executive board appointments, succession management and leadership development. He has advised companies including Vodafone, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Bank of England. He is a dedicated philanthropist, promoting the Catholic faith in several causes.

Lord Spencer of Alesford
Businessman and
philanthropist

Michael Spencer founded NEX Group, specialising in financial services, which he sold in 2018. Nearly 30 years ago he founded the ICAP Charity Day, where each year the firm donates a day's revenue to charities. Over £140 million has been raised since, supporting 2,200 charitable projects. In 2022 he funded the building of a new £6.25 million sixth-form centre at his alma mater, Worth School.

John Studzinski
Financier and philanthropist

John Studzinski, the managing director and vice chairman of the global investment-management firm PIMCO, has said he did not have any interest initially in working in finance. "At a young age I already had a strong sense of God's purpose for me, which was to pray hard, work hard and help people." The son of working-class



From left: Terry Leahy, Jean-Christophe Iseux, Lord Spencer of Alesford, Luke Johnson

Polish immigrants to Chicago, his charitable interests now include homelessness, human rights, and the arts. He founded The Genesis Foundation to encourage young people in creative careers, and was appointed CBE in 2008 and has two papal knighthoods.

John Whittaker
Businessman and
philanthropist

John Whittaker is chairman of the Peel Group, a property business which invests mainly in the north-west of England. He was chosen as "most influential northerner" by the *Big Issue* in 2010. His philanthropy has included donating £1 million to Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, motivated by the birth of his stillborn granddaughter in 2003. He considered the priesthood after leaving school.

“**John Whittaker's philanthropy includes donating £1 million to Royal Manchester Children's Hospital**

Charity

Christine Allen
Director, CAFOD

Christine Allen was appointed director of the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) in 2019. She said she felt she was "coming home", having discovered Catholic social teaching when she first worked for CAFOD years prior.

Raymond Friel
Chief executive, CSAN

Raymond Friel was a headteacher in several Catholic schools in England before becoming general secretary of the Catholic Independent Schools' Conference. In 2021 he was appointed Chief Executive of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), which works with 54 Catholic grassroots charities across England and Wales. He has authored several books on Catholic education, including *How to Survive in Leadership in a Catholic School* and *Gospel Values for Catholic Schools*, as well as *Formation of the Heart*, published this year.

Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank
Field Marshal

One of Britain's highest-ranking army officers, Charles Guthrie was head of the British armed forces from 1997 to 2001 as Chief of the Defence Staff. He was received into the Church in his 40s and authored *The Just War Tradition*, integrating his work and faith. Appointed GCB in 1994 and GCVO in 2019, he is also a Knight of Malta and a patron of the Cardinal Hume Centre and Caritas Anchor House.

Dr Caroline Hull
National director,
Aid to the Church in Need

"I work every day to promote awareness and raise support for the persecuted Church around the world," says Caroline Hull, who took over as national director of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) from Neville Kyrke-Smith in April 2022. Her recent work for the charity, which she joined in 2014, includes creating a collection of online Bible stories for young people, for which she enlisted bishops, clergy and TV celebrities as audio readers.

Neville Kyrke-Smith
Former director,
Aid to the Church in Need

A former Anglican clergyman, Neville Kyrke-Smith converted to Catholicism nearly 30 years ago, becoming director of ACN almost simultaneously. His work visiting persecuted Christians has taken him across the world, most recently to the Middle East where ACN has been rebuilding communities destroyed by ISIS. He was made a Knight of St Gregory in 2021 for his services to the persecuted Church.

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow
Founder, Mary's Meals

A pilgrimage in 1983 renewed Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow's family's Catholic faith and inspired them to begin charity work. MacFarlane-Barrow and his brother Fergus founded Mary's Meals, named after Our Lady, in 2002 to feed 200 children in Malawi. Twenty years on, it now feeds more

than two million children across 19 countries.

Rosa Monckton
Founder, Team Domenica

Rosa Monckton supports several charities dedicated to helping people with Down's syndrome. She founded one of these, Team Domenica, which is named after her own daughter who has the condition. The charity's aim is to help young adults with learning difficulties gain employment. Last year, 100 per cent of their candidates passed their employment qualifications.

Jane Nicholson
Founder, FARA

After converting to Catholicism in 1991, Jane Nicholson founded the British-based charity FARA, which raises money for and helps Romania's poorest families. "I don't know how I would ever have done the work in Romania without being Catholic," she said, "and the support of the Church, of the sacraments, of my faith, they all seemed part of every decision I made." She recently returned from the Ukrainian-Romanian border, welcoming traumatised refugees fleeing Ukraine as a result of Russia's invasion.

Elizabeth Palmer
CEO,
St Vincent de Paul Society

As CEO of the poverty-care charity

From top: Christine Allen, Rosa Monckton, Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, Raymond Friel



St Vincent de Paul (SVP), Elizabeth Palmer oversees over 10,000 volunteers across the UK, who visit the lonely, support young people, provide community services and promote social justice in every aspect of life. She was inspired in her faith and to become involved with SVP by her father, who was a member for almost 50 years.

Greg Pope
Executive director, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Greg Pope was Labour MP for Hyndburn from 1992 to his retirement in 2010. Deputy director of the Catholic Education Service from 2010 to 2017, he was appointed assistant general secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 2017, becoming its executive director in 2019.

Jack Scarisbrick
Founder, Life

A former professor of history at Warwick University, Jack Scarisbrick has specialised in Tudor history and is known for writing a definitive biography of Henry VIII. He founded Life with his late wife Nuala in 1970 to provide holistic support for both babies and mothers. Fifty years later, Life has 23 houses nationwide, housing over 100 women. They went on to found Zoë's Place in 1995, a hospice for infants and babies.

“
Jack and Nuala Scarisbrick founded Zoë's Place in 1995, a hospice for infants and babies



Peter Hugh Smith
CEO, CCLA

Peter Hugh Smith went to Ampleforth College and Reading University before going straight into fund management, following in his father Andrew Hugh Smith's footsteps by choosing a career in the City of London. Hugh Smith credits his father, a practising Catholic and former chairman of the London Stock Exchange, with making him the man he is today. "He was a religious man, and I believe that my personal ethics and how I look at the world have come to a large extent from him."

CCLA is an unusual investment management company in that it looks after investments for charities, religious organisations and the public sector. With over 36,000 not-for-profit clients, it is UK's largest manager of charity funds.

It traces its roots back to 1958 with the launch of the Church of England Investment Fund, which allowed church organisations to pool their funds and access professional fund management services. Local authorities and the Charity Commission soon followed suit. Still going strong today, CCLA last year launched the Catholic Investment Fund in response to increasing demand from Catholic clients.

"I'm very pleased, being a Catholic that we can do this," says Hugh Smith, who was headhunted for the role of CEO from his job as managing director of Link Asset Services, one of a string of top roles he has held in the City over the course of his 30-year career.

While he concedes that the City has come on by leaps and bounds in terms of its understanding of ethical investment from the 1980s and 1990s, he believes that it has a lot to learn regarding social issues. "We are

stewards of our clients' capital," he says, "and I don't think we are fulfilling that responsibility, getting companies we invest in to address those issues." Which is where CCLA comes in.

The Catholic Investment Fund was launched to do exactly this for CCLA's increasing quantity of Catholic clients. The idea is to invest only in companies that act in alignment with Catholic social teaching and to avoid those which undermine Catholic doctrine, such as companies producing abortion facilitation drugs or engaging in human stem-cell research. To ensure nothing is missed, CCLA appointed a "faith-consistent investment committee" comprised of senior and respected figures from the Catholic Church, whose job is to oversee that the companies proposed by CCLA for investment align with Catholic values.

Alongside investing money for its clients, CCLA is involved with a number of causes as part of its mantra to do good. Recently, it has been raising awareness among companies and actively engaging with them to try and stop modern slavery which, Hugh Smith says, is present in the supply chains of almost every company in Britain.

Inspired by this work at CCLA, he is in the process of becoming a trustee of the Mary Ward Loreto UK charity, which supports six centres in Albania dedicated to ending sex trafficking and forced labour by raising awareness and providing aftercare for victims.

Another area of interest is on improving mental health in the workplace. In May 2022, CCLA launched the CCLA Corporate Mental Health Benchmark, which assesses and ranks 100 of the UK's largest employers listed on the London Stock Exchange – who together account for approximately five million global employees – on how they are approaching and managing workplace mental health.

Under the management of Hugh Smith, CCLA continues to innovate to find new and better ways of leveraging capital for the greater good. In line with this aim, they have just launched the Better World Global Equity Fund, which brings CCLA's investment expertise, previously exclusive to charities, local authorities and the Church of England, to UK retail investors for the first time. "We are excited to be bringing our Good Investment approach to individuals, so that together we can invest to create a better world for both today and the next generation," says Hugh Smith.

Politics

Lord Alton of Liverpool
Member, House of Lords

First elected to parliament in 1979 as MP for Liverpool Edge Hill, David Alton has sat as a crossbench peer in the House of Lords since 1997. For 40 years he has campaigned for the sanctity of human life, human rights and human dignity, and his name has become almost synonymous with the fight for the right to life of unborn babies, which he calls "the supreme human-rights cause".

Lord Alton has worked with numerous charities including Aid to the Church in Need and Jubilee Action, which he co-founded.

Sir Tony Blair
Former Prime Minister

The former Labour prime minister and Catholic convert now runs the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, a non-profit organisation with a particular focus on solving political troubles in the Middle East.

Sir Bill Cash
Conservative MP, Stone

Sir Bill Cash is a leading eurosceptic who led the Maastricht rebellion from a basement in

Westminster in the early 1990s. An alumnus of Stonyhurst College and a constitutional lawyer by background, he devoted his political career to getting Britain out of the EU. He was elected unopposed as chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee in 2010, and has been Conservative MP for Stone since 1984.

Thérèse Coffey
Secretary of State for Health;
Deputy Prime Minister

Thérèse Coffey was appointed deputy prime minister in 2022. She has been Conservative MP for Suffolk Coastal since 2010, often finding interns from the Catholic Bishops' Conference. Coffey voted against the legalisation of same-sex marriage, saying, "None of us was elected on a platform to redefine marriage." She attends the Traditional Latin Mass.

Damian Collins
Conservative MP,
Folkestone & Hythe

Damian Collins was appointed minister for tech and the digital economy in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in 2022. In parliament, he has

previously led inquiries into fake news, tackling the likes of Google and Facebook, and is overseeing the Online Safety Bill's path to regulation. A former altar boy, he was educated at Belmont Abbey, where he won a scholarship, and read history at St Benet's Hall in Oxford.

Iain Duncan Smith
Conservative MP, Chingford
& Woodford Green

Iain Duncan Smith is a long-standing Conservative MP who led the party from 2001-2003. He promotes traditional family values, stating: "There are few more powerful tools for promoting stability than the institution of marriage."

Baroness Hollins
Professor of psychiatry;
adviser to Pope Francis
on safeguarding

Sheila Hollins is a former president of both the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the British Medical Association. She has sat as a crossbench peer since 2010, and was made a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors in 2014 by Pope Francis. She founded Beyond Words, which creates free, wordless picture books to help people with communication difficulties understand complex topics, and has authored over 40 of their titles on topics including grief, abuse, and going to church.



Law

Dame Finola O'Farrell
High Court judge

Finola O'Farrell became a High Court judge in 2016. She is in charge of the Technology and Construction Court.

Mark Watson-Gandy
Barrister; chancellor of the
British Association of the
Order of Malta

Mark Watson-Gandy specialises in UK insolvency law and is chair of the Biometrics and Forensic Ethics Group. He was made a Knight of St Gregory by Pope Benedict XVI, and was appointed chancellor of the British Association of the Order of Malta in 2022.

Above from top: Dame Finola O'Farrell, Mark Watson-Gandy
Right, from left: Tony Blair, Sir Bill Cash, Iain Duncan Smith



GETTY IMAGES

Mike Kane
Labour MP,
Wythenshawe & Sale East

Shadow Minister for Aviation and Maritime, Mike Kane has held a number of ministerial roles under both Jeremy Corbyn and Sir Keir Starmer since he won his seat in 2014. Following the murder of Sir David Amess MP, he proposed the "Amess amendment" in parliament, to ensure access for Catholic priests to administer the last rites at crime scenes.

Sir Edward Leigh
Conservative MP,
Gainsborough

Sir Edward Leigh is an outspoken Catholic who frequently addresses parliament on ethical matters, including arguing for tightening the abortion law and a ban on human embryonic research. He is a qualified barrister and member of the Inner Temple.

Jacob Rees-Mogg
Secretary of State for
Business, Energy and
Industrial Strategy

Jacob Rees-Mogg is a prominent social conservative and eurosceptic. He married his wife in Canterbury Cathedral (special permission was given, and the celebrant was the then-Abbot of Downside) and they have six

Below from left: Jacob Rees-Mogg, Tom Tugendhat



children who are named after popes and saints.

Alex Stafford
Conservative MP,
Rother Valley

Alex Stafford was elected MP for the Rother Valley in 2019, becoming the first Conservative to hold the seat. He was educated by the Benedictines at Ealing Abbey School and then at St Benet's Hall, Oxford, whose closure he has lamented both in parliament and in the pages of the *Catholic Herald*. He joined the government benches in January this year as parliamentary private secretary in the Ministry of Defence; he later became PPS to the then-prime minister, Boris Johnson.

Tom Tugendhat
Conservative MP,
Tonbridge and Malling

Former soldier Tom Tugendhat has been an MP since 2015. He ran for the Conservative party leadership in 2022, losing to Liz Truss.

Ann Widdecombe
Former politician; media
commentator; author

Former Conservative MP Ann Widdecombe came into contact with Catholicism during her anti-abortion campaigns during the 1990s, which led to her conversion. A former *Big Brother* contestant, she also sat as a Brexit Party MEP from 2019 to 2021.



Writers & Journalists



Robin Aitken
Journalist and author

Robin Aitken was a journalist at the BBC for over 25 years. In 2007, he wrote the book *Can We Trust the BBC?* which alleged pervasive and institutional left-wing bias at the company. His third book, *The Noble Liar*, described Britain as a "post-Christian country".

Gavin Ashenden
Writer, broadcaster, former
chaplain to HM The Queen

Former Anglican vicar Gavin Ashenden was chaplain to the Queen from 2008 to 2017. He was received into the Catholic Church in 2019 and now writes and speaks as a lay apologist. He hosts the *Catholic Herald's* podcast *Merely Catholic*.

Colin Brazier
GB News presenter

After 24 years working for Sky News, "I said a Hail Mary as my finger hesitated over the 'send' button of my resignation email," Colin Brazier noted in 2021. "I've moved to GB News," he told



the *Catholic Herald*, "to try and un-muffle some of the voices who currently feel left out of national conversations. And to do so with civility and humility."

Léonie Caldecott
UK editor, *Magnificat*;
contributing editor,
Humanum Review

Caldecott met her late husband, Stratford, at university in Oxford. They both converted to Catholicism in the early 1980s, and wanted to use their work in publishing to "communicate something of the beauty of the Catholic faith that [they] had discovered together". They founded the Centre of Faith and Culture in Oxford, and the editorial and educational provider Second Spring, named after John Henry Newman's famed homily of 1852 in which he speaks about a coming revival of Catholicism in England.

John Cornwell
Journalist, author, academic

John Cornwell studied English Language and Literature at St Benet's Hall, Oxford and is

best known for his investigative journalism. He has written widely on the Catholic Church and the modern papacy. From 2009 to 2017, he was director of the Rustat Conferences, which brought together academics with those from politics, business, the media and education to discuss the issues of the day. He also writes on scientific, ethical and religious issues for the *Sunday Times* and religious affairs publications.

Lyse Doucet
BBC correspondent

Canadian-born Lyse Doucet began working for the BBC in 1983. Now the BBC's chief international correspondent, she has reported from across the world, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jerusalem and Syria. She was awarded an OBE in 2014 for her services to British broadcast journalism.

Julie Etchingham
Presenter, *ITV News at Ten*

Julie Etchingham's career started as a teenager when her local radio station invited Catholic students to make a programme on the Stations of the Cross. From this, she was invited to work for BBC radio. She has interviewed Pope Francis and world leaders such as

Above from left: Mark Lawson, Lyse Doucet. Below from left: Julie Etchingham, Fraser Nelson, Colin Brazier, Lord Moore of Etchingham



Hillary Clinton. She was presenter of the year at the Royal Television Society Journalism Awards in 2010 and 2016. Despite admitting being "challenged" by Catholicism, she is raising her two children in the Faith.

Fiona Fox
Director,
Science Media Centre

A former head of media for CAFOD, Fiona Fox is now the director of the Science Media Centre, which keeps the media briefed on developments in science. She was appointed OBE in 2013 for her services to science.

Paul Goodman
Editor, *ConservativeHome*,
and former MP

A convert from Judaism, Paul Goodman briefly trained as a novice monk at Quarr Abbey before leaving to join the *Catholic Herald* in 1990. He went on to become comment editor for the *Daily Telegraph*. Elected as MP for Wycombe in 2001, he retired from politics in 2010, claiming to be demoralised by the crossbench expenses scandals. He now edits *ConservativeHome*.

Joseph Kelly
Editor, *The Catholic Directory*

Editor of *The Catholic Directory*, Joseph Kelly is editorial director of the Edit Partnership, which specialises in Catholic publishing across England and Wales.



Mark Lawson
Author and broadcaster

Mark Lawson is a *Guardian* columnist and BBC radio broadcaster specialising in culture and the arts. A former presenter of *Front Row* on BBC Radio 4, he has written several books and a number of radio plays for the BBC, including *St Graham and St Evelyn, Pray For Us*, a play about the relationship between Catholic novelists Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh.

John Micklethwait
Editor-in-chief,
Bloomberg News

John Micklethwait has been editor-in-chief of *Bloomberg News* since 2015. He has co-authored seven books, including *God is Back*, a controversial thesis attesting to a global resurgence of faith in the late 20th century.

Lord Moore of Etchingham
Journalist and author

Charles Moore is a former editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Spectator* and the *Sunday Telegraph*, and the official biographer of Lady Thatcher. He is the founder of the Rectory Society and a patron of the Latin Mass Society.

Fraser Nelson
Editor, *the Spectator*

Fraser Nelson worked at the



Times and the *Scotsman* before becoming editor of the *Spectator* in 2009. The magazine's circulation has almost doubled during his tenure. He has claimed "one cannot join the Church as a liberal Catholic. There is only one kind of Catholicism, and its teaching is laid out in the Catechism".

Laura Perrins
Co-founder and co-editor,
The Conservative Woman

Laura Perrins ceased working as a barrister to care for her children and became a prominent advocate for the rights of stay-at-home mothers. She rose to prominence in 2013 after confronting then-deputy prime minister Nick Clegg on this topic on LBC. She was described as "the woman who mauled Nick Clegg" in the *Irish Independent*. A *Herald* columnist, she was included in the BBC's 100 Women in 2013 for co-founding *The Conservative Woman*.

Benedict Rogers
Founder, *Hong Kong Watch*

Benedict Rogers is a human rights activist and journalist. His work focuses on Asia, specialising in Burma, North Korea and Indonesia. He is co-founder and chair of *Hong Kong Watch*, an advocacy NGO launched to speak out for basic liberties and autonomy for Hong Kong. He is also the co-founder and deputy chair of the Conservative Party's human rights commission.



Allan Scott
Screenwriter and producer

The Scottish screenwriter and producer was nominated for BAFTA's Alexander Korda Award for Best British Film and for two Genie Awards for his 1997 film *Regeneration*. He was also executive producer and co-creator of the multi-award-winning Netflix series *The Queen's Gambit*.

Frank Skinner
TV presenter, writer, comedian

Frank Skinner has hosted several comedy TV and radio shows throughout his career, most notably BBC's *Room 101* for 12 years. He recently authored *A Comedian's Prayer Book*, aiming to demonstrate the joy of Faith. He has spoken openly about his struggle with alcoholism and how it stimulated his return to the Faith.

Tim Stanley
Journalist and author

A self-proclaimed traditionalist, convert and former academic Tim Stanley is a columnist and leader writer for the *Daily Telegraph* and a contributor to the *Guardian* and *Spectator*. He has presented BBC Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* and appeared on its *Moral Maze* show.

Edward Stourton
Broadcaster

Ampleforth and Cambridge



alumnus Edward Stourton regularly hosts BBC Radio 4's Sunday-morning religious and ethics programme. His books include *John Paul II: Man of History* and *In the Footsteps of St Paul*.

James Stourton
Art historian

James Stourton is an art historian and TV presenter who was the former chair of Sotheby's UK. Educated at Ampleforth and Cambridge, he is the biographer of Kenneth Clark. From 2012 to 2021, he served on the panels of the Heritage Memorial Fund and the Acceptance in Lieu Panel. He has written a number of books, most recently *Heritage: A History of How We Conserve Our Past*.

Brendan Walsh
Editor, The Tablet

Brendan Walsh has been editor of *The Tablet* since 2017.

Ed West & Mary Kenny
Deputy editor, UnHerd; journalist and author

Former deputy editor of the *Catholic Herald*, Ed West is now deputy editor of UnHerd and the author of several books. Following his debut *The Diversity Illusion*, Peter Osborne called him "one of the most interesting of the rising generation of political writers". His mother, Mary Kenny, is also an author and journalist, and a former columnist at the *Herald*.



Other

Baroness Howard de Walden & Susan Buchan
Landowner and philanthropist

Lady Howard de Walden, 86, oversees the Howard de Walden Estate, which owns the freehold of much of Marylebone in London. She is perhaps best known for her prohibition of abortion clinics on Harley Street in 2007. Her sister Susan Buchan is a Dame of Malta and a generous supporter of Catholic causes.

The Duke of Norfolk Earl Marshal

The Dukes of Norfolk are traditionally the most senior lay figures in the Catholic Church in Britain; their hereditary ceremonial duties include the organisation of royal funerals and coronations. Edward Fitzalan-Howard, the 18th duke, is president of the Friends of Arundel Cathedral and a trustee of the Oxford and Cambridge Catholic Education Board.

Richard Fitzalan-Howard
Former president, British Association of the Order of Malta

Having recently stepped down as president of the UK branch of the Order of Malta, Richard Fitzalan-Howard remains involved in all aspects of the order's activities, including running care homes, organising pilgrimages and fundraising. He is a senior adviser and former chair of investments at Stonehage Fleming and a first cousin of the Duke of Norfolk.

Rob Ffello
Chairman, Catholic Union of Great Britain

A convert to Catholicism, former MP Rob Ffello was one of few Labour MPs to vote against same-sex marriage, citing his religious views, after which he was forced to resign from the party. He was later deselected by the Liberal Democrats for his socially conservative views. He is chair of the Catholic Union of Great Britain.

Nadey Hakim
Transplant surgeon and sculptor

Nadey Hakim performed the world's first hand, kidney and pancreas transplants, and has written several acclaimed books on these procedures. He is also a prolific sculptor and his hyper-realistic busts have attracted praise from the Vatican. After many years of fundraising for the British Red Cross, he was appointed vice-president of the charity in 2019.

Lady Celestria Hales
President, British Association of the Order of Malta

A former diarist for *Harpers & Queen*, Lady Celestria Hales is president of the British Association of the Order of Malta, following in the footsteps of her father, the 5th Earl of Gainsborough.

The Marquess and Marchioness of Lothian
Parliamentarian and charity patron

Scottish former MP Michael Ancram KC has been a member



Opposite from left: Frank Skinner, Allan Scott. Above from top: Jessica Ogilvy-Stuart, Nadey Hakim

of the House of Lords since 2010. He is a knight of the Order of St Lazarus and the Order of St John, which traces its origins back to the Knights Hospitaller in the Middle Ages. His wife, Jane, was the fourth daughter of the 16th Duke of Norfolk, and is a patron of the Right to Life Trust.

Jessica Ogilvy-Stuart
Entrepreneur and education specialist

Jessica Ogilvy-Stuart founded the Brandon Learning Centre in 2006, where she acts as a consultant to parents and helps children gain entry to top private schools in the UK, US and Australia. She was head of training at Asia Pacific for Bloomberg and has taught extensively in the UK and Hong Kong. In 2017, she was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at Oxford University and is a governor of Downside School.

Fra Max Rumney
Grand Prior of England, Order of Malta

Max Rumney is the Grand Prior of England for the Order of Malta. The Grand Priory of England, established around 1144, exists to care for the members' spiritual life and set an example of Christian living: the continuing of the Order's 1,000-year tradition.

Joseph Shaw
Chairman, Latin Mass Society

A fellow in philosophy at St Benet's Hall, Oxford, Joseph Shaw is known for defending and promoting the Traditional Latin Mass through the Latin Mass Society, which includes sponsoring priests in seminaries and organising national pilgrimages. He hails the unique "atmosphere and spiritual power" of the Traditional Mass, which he has attended since childhood. Seeking to safeguard traditional Church teaching, he has been in the public eye for scrutinising recent papal encyclicals *Amoris laetitia* and *motu proprio Traditionis custodes*. He has nine children.

“**Joseph Shaw hails the unique ‘atmosphere and spiritual power’ of the Latin Traditional Mass, which he has attended since childhood**”

‘We’re bringing people together’

Hugh Kerr speaks to Robert Ffello, chair of the Catholic Union of Great Britain



SINCE OCTOBER last year, Robert Ffello, formerly the Labour MP for Stoke-on-Trent South, has served as chairman of the 150-year-old Catholic Union of Great Britain. For the majority of the time since its inception, it has operated below the radar, continuing with the original aim of its founders in combatting Catholic disability and in its recent history promoting Catholic values in public life. Lately it has made strides towards raising its public profile and with Ffello's appointment they have found somebody who, he says, "shares their commitment to grow the organisation and put it into a position where it was no longer a best-kept secret but something that everybody was aware of".

While this is being achieved through the benefits derived from the increased exposure of social media, it is paired with a slight change of direction from the new chairman who encourages a greater focus towards the educational. "By that I mean educating parliamentarians about the issues of concern to the laity, particularly the Catholic parliamentarians," Ffello says, "and making sure that they are well sighted about the issues the laity care about. I know from my time there that can be a bit hit and miss."

This outlook goes both ways, however, because in order to educate the debate appropriately the laity has to be informed enough to understand the issues and implications. "Then we can use that education as a way of persuading and influencing those who have the ability to make changes," he says.

The Catholic Union doesn't take it upon itself to lead every debate. In the recent Assisted Dying Bill debate, it was able to make use of the considerable resources of Right to Life UK and in doing so encourage their members to join a "campaign conducted by a full-time organisation that is dedicated to that one purpose". It is multifaceted in its method. It not only educates but also operates as a platform that brings people together. "We are trying to be an umbrella, a bridge, an education body," Ffello says, "and I think they all fit together in the same space." **CH**

The Blair regime in Downing Street became infamous for Alistair Campbell saying that “We don’t do God.” But Cherie Blair loses little time in correcting this political myth after we meet in her mews-like office in north Mayfair on the day that Liz Truss became PM. “Faith and Labour politics” is what originally brought Cherie and her husband Tony together as young lawyers, so when Campbell made that remark Cherie disagreed. “I did say to Tony at the time: “But you DO do GOD”.

What did he reply? “Well, he does God first of all. I mean, he knows that. But I also know that there is an important position here about a secular society and the separation between your private beliefs and what you do in the public sphere.”

Tony Blair left his formal conversion to the Roman Faith until after he left office as prime minister. But it is clear that he was pretty much an honorary Catholic, even when prime minister. How much of his conversion was down to her?

“I would say that his conversion was down to him. I was his sponsor. When I was at LSE [where she got a first class law degree] no one talked about faith, so it was quite strange when I met Tony at the Bar for me to meet someone who was happy to talk about and even raise religious matters, and so strangely enough religion was always there in our relationship. And when the children came along there was no question in my mind that they should be brought up Catholic and Tony was perfect happy for that to be the case.”

Cherie credits an Anglican Australian friend from Oxford, Peter Thompson – who ironically became a headmaster who once employed Boris Johnson – for “bringing Tony into the church”. Aged 21, Tony was confirmed in the Church of England. Cherie had been an active member of the Young Christian Students when at school. Today she supports an inter-faith chaplaincy at LSE, the London School of Economics.

I brought up President John F Kennedy’s view that faith was a private matter for politicians. I wondered if she felt that Catholic leaders could entirely hide their beliefs away quite so easily? When Tony was prime minister did she find herself having any disagreements with him on matters of faith or conscience; or find herself siding with cross-party Catholic MPs rather than with the Labour party line?

“It was quite strange really because throughout my childhood and growing up, being a Catholic was very much a minority and I think you were very conscious of being a minority. I came from Liverpool and when I was at school [Seaford Convent Grammar] our big feast day was St Patrick’s Day. Many of the nuns were Irish and my grandmother’s cousin was a parish priest.”

Although known as Cherie, she was actually christened “Theresa Cara” at her grandmother’s insistence so she was named after a saint. After her actor father left her mother – actress Gale Howard – when Cherie was eight, she was brought up by her paternal grandmother, Vera Booth, who was a devout Irish Catholic.

Did you ever consider becoming a nun?

“No! You used to pray for vocations. Most of the girls, I think, would pray, “Please not me!” Fortunately God didn’t



Keeping faith and politics separate?

William Cash speaks to Cherie Blair about her upbringing, her marriage and meeting popes

call me, so I’m very happy.”

Cherie’s was a deeply religious family. Two of her father’s cousins became priests, one of whom was only three years older than Cherie. “He was being groomed to become a bishop before he tragically died in his 40s.”

On the subject of Joe Biden, did she empathise with the conflict between his Catholic faith – which clearly forbids abortion – and his pro-choice stance on abortion?

“Of course I feel sympathy with him,” she says. “In the end the priests and the bishops are there for a pastoral role and to turn your back on somebody because of what they do in their job I think is a sad thing. Many priests I know would think differently about how you treat the person and how you treat the policy.”

Isn’t the dignity of human life one of the most important parts of the Catholic creed? “I totally agree with the dignity of human life and you know I’ve said myself that abortion is not something I would hope I would ever have to contemplate. Indeed when Leo [her son] was born and they wanted me to have an amniocentesis [to check for foetal abnormalities] because I was an elderly mother before he was born, I said no because I didn’t want the risk.”

Could she understand why certain priests in America would refuse to give Biden Holy Communion and regard it as hypocrisy to publicly identify as a Catholic but at the same time say it’s perfectly acceptable to end human life?

“I do feel quite strongly about this – it’s about ‘hate the sin, love the sinner’ – and you can have your personal beliefs but the Church should be open, I think, to everyone who wants to come and participate. So I’m not in favour of denying Communion to people.”

Was it difficult to live a normal Catholic life during her Downing Street years? Was it easy to receive the sacraments?

“Not really,” she says. “But we were very lucky, especially at Chequers as we could go to Fr Tim Russ in Great Missenden. And we’d go every Sunday, with the kids. Tony would go with us even before he was a convert.” Various other priests played an important role in Blair family life including the priest at Sedgefield who baptised their children, and Fr John Walsh who was the chaplain at RAF Walton. “He still is a family friend and said Mass for our 25th wedding anniversary when we had a party at Chequers.”

Then there were the various Vatican audiences. Tony Blair has met with the three most recent popes. When he met John

Paul II in 2003 the prime minister (then an Anglican) received Holy Communion from the pope.

“We were very fortunate to have a meeting with John Paul but Downing Street quite rightly were very insistent that it was a private visit. It was an amazing experience in the Vatican. I was all in black. We didn’t stay at the embassy; we stayed at the Irish College. There was a debate as to whether to put us in the best room but then they decided they shouldn’t as it was usually for a bishop and they were worried that it wouldn’t be right to have a married couple to sleep there – which I thought was quite amusing!”

The intense experience of talking with John Paul II was such that she felt her Irish grandmother “looking down” on her in disbelief that she had actually met the pope. “He spoke to Tony and then we all came in and he presented us with gifts. And Leo, he was very sweet with Leo. And on the next day on Sunday he said Mass for us in his own chapel and we were taken in to private parts of the Vatican.”

Singers at the Mass were from the English, Scottish and Irish colleges in Rome. When she walked in she saw the pope sitting there looking “frail and making his personal prayers. Then he stood up as though transformed.”

“It was a very important moment for the whole family,” she recalls. “I was in school when the 40 Martyrs were beatified and I was there thinking all these years later: this is the first time a British prime minister had Mass said to him by the pope in a very personal way. And I think at the time, Tony spoke to the pope about becoming a Catholic but he wasn’t going to actually convert until after he stood down because of the question of appointing the [Anglican] bishops.”

Other than his conversations with various popes, was there any other priest who helped convert Tony Blair? “It was the effort of a number, but the actual conversion was done by Fr Mark O’Toole (now Archbishop of Cardiff). He did Tony’s formation. I think it happened in Westminster Cathedral.” Cardinal Hume and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor also played their part, she said.

Has you both being Catholic changed your marriage at all? “I don’t think so as it was a gradual process for years; since our children were born Tony always came to the Catholic church.” Does he take an active interest in Vatican politics and church affairs? “Well, not so much the politics of the Vatican but he is interested, obviously, in those things. Not least because after he left office he set up his Faith Foundation [now part of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change] which was very much about interfaith relations. He would read the Bible every night and still does, and says his prayers and has done that for as long as I can remember.”

Do the Blairs ever go to Latin Mass? “No,” says Cherie. “But I can remember when even the Epistle and the Gospels were in Latin.”

We moved on to Catholic writers. Was she a fan of Graham Greene (who David Cameron once said was his favourite novelist). “Well of course, but not particularly because he was Catholic”. What about Evelyn Waugh? There was a hesitant pause before she answered. “Not especially, but I quite enjoyed *Scoop*. He was a bit too posh for my liking.” **CH**

Below from left: Tony Blair, Cherie Blair and Gordon Brown attend a memorial Mass for Pope John Paul II at Westminster Cathedral; Pope Benedict and Cherie Blair during a private audience at the Vatican



Quantum of Solace

William Cash speaks to technologist and papal knight Ilyas Khan about his conversion to Catholicism at 18, and about being both a scientist and a Christian

The moment I sit down in the Hopper meeting room in the bustling London Victoria offices of technology entrepreneur Ilyas Khan, founder of Cambridge Quantum Computing and now CEO of Quantinuum, it feels like walking into a maths lecture by Stephen Hawking. Algebraic equations are scrawled on a board in felt tip. On another wall is a photo of 20th-century computer genius Grace Hopper (in US navy uniform), one of the first programmers of the iconic Harvard Mark 1 computer.

Khan himself is one of Britain's leading computer science pioneers as well as being a Catholic – brought up as a Muslim – for whom his faith is integral to his life. He was made a Knight of the Order of St Gregory the Great by Pope Francis in 2015. His spiritual journey from being a Muslim brought up in the Lancashire mill towns of Haslingden and Accrington to now being a papal knight (as well as philanthropist) makes him one of the most interesting Catholics in Britain today; not the least as his calm confidence makes him a man blessed with a rare lay charisma: intellectual and spiritual conviction combined with a strong emotional connection to the faith.

After Cambridge Quantum merged with the quantum operations of US Defence and Aerospace giant Honywell last year, he has remained as CEO of the company, now the world's largest and leading quantum computing corporation re-named Quantinuum. He is also a fellow of St Edmund's College in Cambridge, a former owner of Accrington Stanley Football Club, the founder of the *Asia Literary Review* and a fellow of the Judge Business School at the University of Cambridge, where he is the Leader in Residence.

Catholic lay leaders should not hide away, he says. "When people say to me 'What is your faith?' or 'Why are you a Catholic?', I don't hide my Catholicism. I believe in promoting Catholic values in the public square and I want people to know who I am."

His preference is for traditional Catholic liturgy but he has photos of both Pope Benedict and Pope Francis at his home in Surrey where he says he lives a "a typical workmanlike believer's life" with his wife and children. His house has an altar and an expansive collection of theological and spiritual books. A particular favourite is a book about Jesus written by Benedict XVI that he likes to re-visit as it "brings into everyday life our encounter with Jesus the person, the human being".

“When people say to me ‘What is your faith?’ or ‘Why are you a Catholic?’, I don’t hide my Catholicism. I believe in promoting Catholic values in the public square and I want people to know who I am

When he looks at his collection ("I'm lucky to have a beautiful library") he says "the little section that is Benedict are the most read and re-read and well notated books". Others well represented are the works of John Henry Newman, Derrida and Wittgenstein (he is a member of the British Wittgenstein Society).

But perhaps the greatest influence on him – indeed a main reason he converted from Islam to Christianity – is the German philosopher Hans Urs von Balthasar. Khan had grown up in Lancashire in the late 1970s and 80s which he says "wasn't a particularly nice place to be young and not white". But then from the moment he walked in through the door of Netherhall House, an Opus Dei student residence in north London (he was at the University of London) his world changed. "Everything changed for me because I was very far away from Lancashire and Netherhall was my safe haven. And I discovered a book by von Balthasar in the library."

The book was a bound photocopy of a volume called *Prayer*. This was before Ignatius Press had begun their translations to make them available to the non-German speaking world. "It was in English but it was an amateur translation. It was a non-formal translation of what I now know to be a large portion of *Prayer*. It was lying in a corner on the bookshelf of the library and I remember picking it up more out of curiosity, I had no idea what it was." The book was to change his life, and he converted to Roman Catholicism aged 18. The book's appeal was "definitely intellectual", recalls Khan. "I think emotionally we believe that one of the great strengths of Catholicism is our need to be emotionally connected, which is the whole point of prayer, which is the whole point of the liturgy, which is the whole point of this world, the beautiful way in which we celebrate our faith. So that was there but for me it was the intellectual engagement that pulled me in."

It's no coincidence that Khan is today a patron and supporter of the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst, a charity – co-founded by Lord Alton – devoted to training up would-be young Catholic leaders to enter public life and live lives of purpose. He values "consistency" as the most important leadership quality. "The Catholic voice in the public square is something that I am very interested in. So if the public square is Great Britain then I want the Catholic voice to matter."

Pope Benedict's theology also was to have a hold over him as a young Catholic, along with Tolkien's *Lord Of the Rings* whose world was "only a heartbeat away" in Catholic Lancashire, inspired by the Hopkins-esque landscape and walks



along the rivers Ribble and Hodder. "You can't help but read *The Lord of the Rings* and be motivated by this very compelling vision of salvation."

Another important influence is Fr Joseph Fessio, founder of Ignatius Press, who was ordained in the 1970s under the direction of Fr Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict. Fessio also helped to found the Casa Balthasar, a "house of discernment" in Rome that has been open since 1991. "It caters for young people who were seeking inspiration and who were seeking some sort of enlightenment." Khan's intellectual engagement with Benedict in a "theological way" started there and over the years he has got more involved with Ignatius Press and Fr Fessio's publishing mission.

Khan prefers not to enter into the progressive versus trad culture wars. "My engagement with my religion is as intellectual as it is sacramental and I'm deeply interested, as the *Herald* is, about the trad versus progressive conversation. I am a bit old-fashioned. Of course I would put myself at the more conservative end because of Benedict and Balthasar."

Is your preference for Latin or vernacular? "I find myself moved beyond words by the Latin Mass and it is impossible to rationalise, so if somebody says, 'Well, people don't understand what's being said', you cannot argue against that. But the simple fact remains that if I have a choice between say, going right for a Latin Mass and left for an English Mass, I would always go right. But what I don't do is try and pretend somehow this is a mark for or against the trad versus progressive debate, I think it's not."

Khan likes to go to Latin Mass at Farnborough Abbey, not far from his home in Surrey. "Any human being with any sensitivity and sensibility sitting through Mass from the Benedictine tradition that is celebrated there will understand what I'm saying."

Does he find a certain spiritual, magisterial beauty in science? "I do yes. Logic, for example, is something which is foundational to the human intellect, and out of logic springs language – questions about how language emerges and how it works – which is a deep and long-standing interest of mine. For too long Christians have been on the defensive in the sciences and I get great joy and pleasure and am energised by conversations with people who assume if you are scientific you can't be religious. Science is the language of nature and nature is of course in my opinion the single most compelling example of the fact that God exists. And so yes, that aspect of me is really important. As Christians and Catholics we do not engage often enough in the debate about whether ethically we might be tinkering with God's order. My response to this is that actually God's order is what is unveiled through nature."

Khan used to be chairman of the Stephen Hawking Foundation. Was Hawking really a die-hard atheist as he has been portrayed? "My experience of Stephen in the last few years of his life was that he was a lot more nuanced. First, Stephen chose a church service for his funeral, and the readings and context and all that went along with that spoke more about what he really believed than the host of people who have an uninformed opinion about what Stephen's beliefs might have been. He was either respectful of religion or even a believer in what you and I would call God. It would be wrong, though, to suggest that he was Christian; that would be misleading."

We move onto where he sees science heading in the next 20 to 50 years. Is he worried that we may lose the freedom of individual choice which is at the root of Christian belief? "Due to the advent of quantum computing we are living through an industrial technology revolution the likes of which humanity has never encountered," he says. "It might at some point be impossible for us when interacting with devices to distinguish between that technology and a human being. Does that make a device a human being? No, of course not. Devices will never replace humanity..." CH

Below: with Professor Stephen Hawking (left) and David Alton (right)



Catholic leaders of the future

These are the ten Catholic leaders under 40 who the *Herald* expects to see helping to shape the Catholic conversation in the UK and beyond

Alisdair Hungerford-Morgan CEO, Right to Life UK

Hungerford-Morgan worked for a large investment firm before taking over the team at Right to Life UK, working across education, politics and media. Hungerford-Morgan advises charities and non-profits in the disability and human rights sector in a number of countries, focusing on communications, digital and political strategy. David Alton describes Right to Life UK as “by far the most effective pro-life organisation working in Westminster”.

Stefan Kaminski Director, The Christian Heritage Centre, Stonyhurst

Stefan Kaminski is executive director of The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst, the UK’s newest retreat, study, and Christian leadership centre. Following study in philosophy and theology, he pursued a post-graduate specialisation in marriage and family life at the John Paul II Institute in Rome. Kaminski has opened a purposely restored historic building in the grounds of Stonyhurst College facilitating education, formation, and evangelisation. It also offers an annual Christian Leadership Formation programme.

Dr Rebekah Lamb Academic

Dr Rebekah Lamb is assistant professor in theology, imagination and the arts at St Andrews, specialising in the 19th century to the present, with an emphasis on the Pre-Raphaelites as well as their affiliate circles and inheritors. She is often invited to speak and write on theological and cultural themes, contributing to *Church Life Journal*, *Convivium* and the *Catholic Herald*. She has featured in programmes for the BBC and the McGrath Institute at the University of Notre Dame. She delivered the 2020 Cardinal Winning Lecture (Glasgow University) on St Thérèse of Lisieux’s status as a Doctor of the Church for our times.

Luke de Pulford Human rights campaigner, CEO, Arise Foundation

Following his studies in the UK and Rome, Luke de Pulford co-founded the anti-slavery charity the Arise Foundation, with fellow Catholic John Studzinski. He coordinates the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, highlighting the country’s human rights abuses, co-founded the Coalition for Genocide Response, sits as a commissioner on the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, advises the World Uyghur Congress, and is an adviser of Hong Kong Watch.

Dr Beppe Pezzini Academic

Dr Beppe Pezzini is associate professor of Latin and a fellow of

Corpus Christi, Oxford. He was previously at St Andrews and before that at Magdalen College, Oxford, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa. He is an expert in the Latin language and literature, with a special focus on Early Latin. His interests have converged into a series of works on modern literature, including St John Henry Newman’s *Callista*, and articles on Tolkien’s works and poetics.

Ryan Christopher Director, ADF International UK

Following studies at Cambridge and in Rome, Christopher set up the London presence of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and grew it into a significant team. ADF is a Christian legal advocacy group promoting religious freedom, family and the unborn.

Brenden Thompson CEO, Catholic Voices

Thompson is the CEO of Catholic Voices, known for its media work. Brenden worked in youth and parish ministry before taking on the leading role training and coaching Catholics to speak to news agencies and broadcasters to better explain the Catholic position on contentious and current affairs.

Dominic McCann Addiction expert, CEO, Castle Craig Hospital

Dominic McCann spent several years working with charities in the UK, Eastern Europe and Africa,

particularly the Order of Malta, in areas of learning disabilities, disaster relief and development, resource building and primary healthcare services. McCann is CEO of Castle Craig Hospital, a rehab centre for alcohol, drug and behavioural disorders. In 2018 he led a successful campaign to highlight abuses of the Google Ads platform and other unethical business practices in the sector.

Andrew Cusack Political adviser, writer, founder, Catholics in the Conservative Party

Andrew Cusack has lived in New York, Buenos Aires, Fife, the Western Cape and presently resides in London where he works for Sir Edward Leigh MP. He is the founding chairman of Catholics in the Conservative Party, which aims to encourage Catholics to take a more active part in the society around them through the Conservative Party. He writes for *The Critic*, the *New York Sun*, *Quadrant*, the *Catholic Herald* and his own site, andrewcusack.com.

Dr Ewelina U Ochab Human rights advocate

Co-founder of the Coalition for Genocide Response. Ewelina Ochab is a lawyer at The International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute, a contributor to *Forbes*, the deputy director of Refcem, (the Coptic Orthodox office for advocacy and public policy. Ochab works on the topic of genocide, with specific focus on the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities around the world.