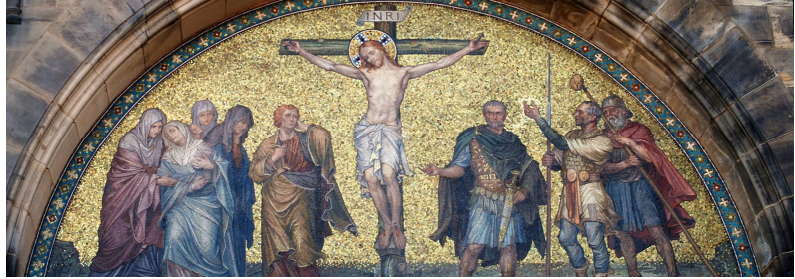




# Newsletter

The Personal Ordinariate of  
Our Lady of the Southern Cross  
Vol 1 No 2  
2 April 2020  
**Passiontide**



## The Ordinary's Message

We are not yet two weeks into the effective shut-down of group gatherings as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic. In some ways it seems even longer than just that; however, we should be prepared for a much longer ðnew normalö with perhaps even stricter levels of isolation and/or confinement that may persist for months.



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But even as some might be beginning to experience feelings of cabin fever, have we noticed a few blessings? There is much less traffic and the noise associated with it; in particular, far fewer airline flights, so many of which fly directly over us here in Homebush as they arrive or leave the Sydney airport. And yet, the sound of silence, much as it can be helpful to times of prayer, contemplation and meditation, can also border on eerie. We live adjacent to a small, but normally well-used park, at the end of which is a day-care facility. I miss the hum and noise of the cheerful laughter and yes, shouting, of children at play.

Happily, while humanity is on a pandemically imposed ðholdö the natural world continues as ever. The novelty for my wife and I, of the varied sounds of the sub-tropical birds, so much louder than the temperate zone birds of Canada, tell us that, while we humans effectively are holding our breath, the buzz of life otherwise continues. Perhaps we can use such signs as portents of encouragement that, ðthis too will pass.ö

And yet, perhaps we might also anticipate that this experience will remind us collectively of the ðshortness and frailty of human life,ö in hopes that there will in fact be a truly new normal when the pandemic passes; that the new normal will see a greater sense for all of the need to care for one another. We might also be so bold to hope that, having been given time to contemplate the reality of mortality, numbers of the un-churched will be encouraged to be re-churched; even that the never-churched may have had stirrings in their God-given, but undeveloped consciences, to seek Him.

As I therefore encourage all of us to remain connected, not just to each other, but to the prayers of the Church, may I also suggest that we be prepared to be engaged in new ways, being especially prepared to respond to those who would argue that this pandemic is proof that God does not exist: ðHow could a loving God permit this to happen.ö I am certain that, as with other natural and man-made disasters throughout history, this current ðevilö will ultimately result in greater good.

The Right Reverend Monsignor Carl Reid, PA  
Ordinary

## John Staunton, Sagada and a true ecumenical journey

By Professor Benjamin M Vallejo Jr  
University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City  
Philippines

Sagada in the Mountain Province, Luzon, Philippines is the only Anglican/Episcopal town in the country. Today it is a municipality with 11,000 residents and because of its elevation at 1,500 meters above sea level, pine forests and a highland climate, it is a major ecotourism and cultural attraction. Its main attraction are the "hanging coffins" a traditional burial practice of the Igorot people which today is very rarely done.

The town was a small tribal settlement and in 1884 Spanish Roman Catholic missionaries established a presence there but due to the 1896 Philippine Revolution, were forced to leave. In 1904 the Rev John A Staunton Jr (1864-1944) established the first Protestant Episcopal mission among the Bontoc Igorots. The Bontocs welcomed the Episcopal missionaries. The Episcopal Church mission to the Philippines focused on the non-Christian tribes and the Muslims in Mindanao as most Filipinos were Roman Catholic. The first Episcopal Bishop of the Philippines, Charles Henry Brent had a policy of not converting Roman Catholics to Anglicanism in not building an altar over another.

Staunton was priest of St Mary the Virgin New York a church that today is still staunchly Anglo-Catholic. The New York Sun reported that it was difficult to differentiate the Mass celebrated there from the Mass said at nearby St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral. He came from a family of Episcopal priests. He completed a degree in mining engineering at Columbia University, attended Harvard before attending the General Theological Seminary. In college he was attracted to Anglo Catholicism. He considered himself with the Anglo Catholic party in the Episcopal Church during his entire career as a

priest. Like most Anglo Catholics he did not identify as Roman Catholic, but as someone who believed in the catholicity of Anglicanism nonetheless.

He had a deep reverence for the Catholic liturgy and traditional devotional practices. This he brought when he established the mission in Sagada. The mission church in Sagada was dedicated to St Mary and was from the start, an Anglo Catholic church.

Staunton the engineer-priest started building the community in preaching the Gospel. He built a sawmill, kilns, mines, taught the Bontoc to plant vegetables that gave the natives a means of employment. Machinery had to be imported to Sagada from the US, carried piece by piece from Manila to the mountains of the Cordillera. Eleven years later, Sagada was a wonder, a Christian town of 2000 people with industries in a largely non-Christian region.

Staunton was a strong authoritarian personality who required the natives to attend Mass. His wife Eliza, a nurse by profession, balanced him in this regard and taught the women livelihoods at the



Figure 1 Rev John Staunton and his choir boys of St Mary the Virgin, Sagada in 1908. Photo from the archives of the Episcopal Church, USA.

time centered on the domestic arts.



The mission was supported by contributions from US Episcopalians largely through the efforts of Bishop Brent and Rev Staunton. However the financial effects of World War I and Great Depression the 1920s resulted in the drying up of donations. Many of the facilities Staunton wanted for Sagada, like a hydroelectric plant for energy self-sufficiency, never came to pass for lack of funds.

Staunton's Anglo Catholicism was not without critics with opponents both from the Episcopal/Anglican and the Roman Catholic sides. His reports to Bishop Brent clearly outlined the Anglo Catholic direction of the mission. Brent did not oppose his direction as perhaps Brent realized that his policy of "not building an altar over another" was consistent with allowing Anglo Catholic practice to flourish.



Figure 2 St Mary the Virgin, Sagada as it appeared in 2011. Photo credits to the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

In the first decade of the mission, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nueva Segovia (Vigan, Ilocos Sur) sent Belgian missionaries to get the Episcopalians out of Sagada. It was a less ecumenical age but still Staunton lived up to the ecumenical ideals we in the 21st century now take for granted and in the end, had good relations with the Roman Catholic priests. When he resigned the Sagada mission, he even suggested to turn over the mission to the Roman Catholics.

Things came to a head when Brent resigned his missionary bishopric in 1918. Temporary

episcopal oversight of the Philippine diocese came under the Anglican Bishop of Shanghai, Bishop Frederick Graves. Graves visited Sagada soon after and was appalled at the Roman Catholic practices (veneration of the Virgin's icon, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, the Elevation of the Host and Chalice in the Mass etc.) instituted by Staunton. Graves forbade these. Staunton then wrote an [open letter to the Bishop](#) which remains definitive, and the significance of the letter is that this deals with the problem of living the Catholic faith within Anglicanism and of being a missionary in a non-European territory.

Bishop Gouverneur Mosher took over the Philippine missionary diocese and while he tolerated Staunton's Anglo Catholicism which US Episcopalians called as the "Sagada Rite", he passed Staunton's funding requests to the American Board of Missions who declined most of his requests. The result was Mosher and Staunton having a falling out. Several letters were exchanged about "pan-Protestant virus" and accusations of "Protestantizing the missions" which even those in the PECUSA sympathetic to Staunton's Anglo Catholicism had to conclude that Staunton's nerves "were highly strung".

Staunton resigned his mission in September 1924 which Mosher accepted. In December of that year the American Board of Missions accepted it. He left the Philippines for the last time on Feb 23, 1925 at the age of 60.

He then assumed the curacy of an Episcopal parish in the USA but never was a successful priest as he had been in Sagada. In 1930 came the definitive point in his Anglican priesthood. In that year the Lambeth Conference allowed contraception in certain circumstances, thus departing from traditional teaching. Staunton resigned his orders and was received into the Catholic Church on September 22, 1930. His wife missed Sagada, and died of illness in 1933. Staunton then entered the [Pontifical Beda College](#) in Rome as a seminarian. With failing health and eyesight, he was unable to finish his

seminary studies but the Catholic hierarchy in Rome was moved by his circumstances, granted a dispensation and he was finally ordained as a Catholic priest. He celebrated his first Mass as a Roman Catholic. A month later he retired and spent his last years at a nursing home. He was called by his Maker in 1944.

In Staunton's day going to Sagada was difficult often on horseback. In the 21st century, we can get there on a four hour trip by airconditioned bus from Manila to Baguio City with a layover in this regional capital of the Cordillera then on another bus for the nine hour, 140 km trip to Sagada. More recently one can take a 14 hour bus ride directly from Manila. We now have mobile phones and Internet and so Sagada is a tad less difficult to get to and less isolated than it was when Staunton came there in 1904. Visitors to Sagada today will note that St Mary the Virgin Episcopal church and St Mary's School remain as the monuments to Father Staunton's work. His career and ministry is an example of the journeys taken by numerous Anglo Catholics who in the end entered their own house as Pope Paul VI would tell the Archbishop of Canterbury. Many Anglicans who completed their journeys to the Catholic Church are not clergy; a vast majority of them are laypeople. No journey is the same. Mine is not the same and cannot compare to the most famous one of all, the one taken by John

Henry Newman, but Staunton's journey remains remarkable indeed. It was a true ecumenical journey. Staunton like Bishop Brent laboured to be on good relations with Roman Catholics and other Protestants. Those who have visited Sagada would understand the value of authentic ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue. The landscape, culture and people of this part of the Cordilleras are breathtaking and deserve our respect. And in silent reflection and prayer at St Mary the Virgin we Catholics realize why authentic ecumenism is all about reconciliation with the Catholic Church.

While St Mary is only one of two non-Roman Catholic churches in the list of notable Filipino churches, today hardly anyone goes to Sagada as pilgrims but more often as tourists. Sagada today faces the social and environmental problems such the lack of water supply and the lack of respect for local customs that befall such picturesque towns. Ms Danilova Molintas, a colleague of mine, who attended the University of the Philippines in Diliman and hails from the town has written an essay about the social costs of tourism in her Episcopalian town.

She told me that people go to Sagada to "find something or to run away from something." How true is that in the story of Father John A Staunton, Jr!



## **Amid Coronavirus Pandemic, Signs of Hope and New Fervour**

Mar. 30, 2020 ó Reprinted from National Catholic Register (A Service of EWTN)

õSave us, Lord our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.ö (Psalm 106:47)

[Patti Armstrong](#)

During the coronavirus pandemic, our Catholic faith lifts us up and takes us deeper into the heart of the Church while also reaching into a stricken world. We are affected by the stress and heartache, but not shocked. Scripture tells us of such things will happen when we turn away from God.

And so, we turn back with sorrow for our sins and renewed fervour for our faith. The ways in which the Church here on earth has joined with heaven against the pandemic are many. Here are a few of the encouraging stories.

\* \* \* \* \*

Prayers were offered by Archbishop Orani Tempestato before the world-famous Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro on March 18. Images of continents and flags of nations affected by COVID-19 were

projected onto the Brazilian statue. In a message of solidarity, hashtags of #praytogether in many languages were also projected. See highlights of the service [here](#).



*ABOVE: Archbishop Orani João Tempesta carries the Blessed Sacrament at an illuminated Christ the Redeemer statue March 18 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Photo by Wagner Meier/Getty Images). BELOW (INSET 1): Photo by Patti Armstrong. BELOW (INSET 2): Courtesy of Father Brian Kassa.*

Many of us are appreciating the Mass like never before now that we cannot attend. Individuals and families



gather together for Sunday (and daily) Mass through the internet. Listings for livestreamed Masses throughout the U.S., and a few in other countries such as in the U.K., Mexico, Australia and the Vatican can be found [here](#). What a beautiful resource it is.

Priests around the world are getting creative with administering the sacraments. A number of churches have set up [drive-thru](#) confessionals and even [list drive-thru confession times](#) on their websites.

There are also a growing number of reports from around the world of the priests blessing people with the Holy Eucharist in creative ways — even being flown over cities. In Lansing, Michigan, Father Mark Rutherford led a three-hour Eucharistic procession around the Diocese of Lansing from [10,000 feet up](#) in a plane.

Father Majdi Allawi, a Maronite Catholic priest in Lebanon, hired a private plane to [fly the Eucharist and statue of Our Lady of Fatima](#) over his country to bless the country, protect the homeland, and heal those who have been infected by the virus.

Another priest [took flight](#) over the city of Wrocław, Poland, during which he prayed the Rosary and asked for God's mercy for his homeland, Europe and the whole world. He took with him the Blessed Sacrament, a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and relics of St. John Paul II.

At [St. Thomas the Apostle Chaldean Church](#) of the Chaldean Catholic [Eparchy of the U.S.A.](#) livestreamed Mass celebrated by Father Rodney Abasso on the feast of St. Joseph, at 7 p.m. and afterward, people adored Jesus in the monstrance from their cars in the parking lot.

Associate pastor Father Bryan Kassa explained in an interview with the Register that the monstrance was lifted about 20 feet and placed in a church window. It was exposed from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m., after which the pastor, Father Bashar Sitto, processed the Blessed Sacrament outside, up and down the full parking lot.

Father Kassa estimated there to be around 300 cars. "It was pretty amazing," he said. "People started coming even before 6:00 to get a good spot. There were so many that the overflow had to be turned away."

Father Kassa made a poster that read, "Flash Your Lights if You Need Confession and I'll Come Over." He and Father Fadie Gorges walked up and down the parking lot hearing confessions from the passenger side window until 11 p.m. If others were in the vehicle, people stepped out to a more private place while still keeping a safe distance.



### **New Plenary Indulgence**

Pope Francis has [assured us](#) that a united humanity will rise from this pandemic. In an interview published in the Italian newspaper [La Stampa March 20](#), he said that Christians must live through this moment with "openness, compassion and hope."

The Vatican also announced an [official decree](#), in response to the epidemic, that a plenary indulgence can be earned daily "to those faithful who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the [Divine Mercy Chaplet](#), to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself."

To obtain this, people must have "the will to fulfil the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible."

A crucial concession has been made for anyone unable to receive the Anointing of the Sick at this time:

The Church prays for those who find themselves unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the Viaticum, entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a Plenary Indulgence on the point of death, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended (cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum*, no.12).

Thank you, God, for all the ways you support us through each other and through your Church. We repent of our sins, beg for your mercy, and offer up our prayers and sacrifices in union with the suffering and death of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





## St Corona – Patron of ... ?

Alas, I fear that I am among those who, without checking the veracity of apparently factual information, jumped onto the bandwagon of accepting an obscure second century Saint, Corona, as the patron of pandemics and viruses. It seems that this is actually a suddenly very popular urban legend, begun by someone at the news agency Reuters.

Now, not that I am inclined to rely heavily on Wikipedia for information about Saints; however, it appears that whomever contributed the following did in fact delve deeply into multiple Catholic sources:

**Saints Victor and Corona** (also known as Victor and Stephanie) are two [Christian martyrs](#). Most sources state that they were killed in [Roman Syria](#) during the reign of [Marcus Aurelius](#) (170s AD). However, various [hagiographical](#) texts disagree about the site of their martyrdom, with some stating that it was [Damascus](#), while [Coptic](#) sources state that it was [Antioch](#). Some Western sources state that [Alexandria](#) or [Sicily](#) was their place of martyrdom. They also disagree about the date of their martyrdom. They may have been martyred during the reign of [Antoninus](#), or [Diocletian](#), while the Roman Martyrology states that it was in the third century when they met their death. Saint Corona was popular in folk treasure magic, being called upon by a treasure hunter to bring treasure, and then sent away through a similarly elaborate ritual.

Their legend states that Victor was a [Roman](#) soldier of Italian ancestry, serving in the city of [Damascus](#) in [Roman Syria](#) during the reign of Emperor [Antoninus Pius](#). He was tortured,

including having his eyes gouged out. Victor was [beheaded](#) in [Damascus](#) in 160 AD.

### Saints Victor and Corona



Illuminated miniature of the martyrdom of Saints Victor and Corona, on a full leaf from a Book of Hours, France (Paris), ca. 1480.

While he was suffering from the tortures, the sixteen-year-old wife of another soldier, named Corona or Stephanie (or Stefania or Stephana from Greek [στέφανος](#), *stéphanos*, "crown", the Greek version of her Latin name, which also means "crown") comforted and encouraged him. For this, she was arrested and interrogated. According to the *passio* of Corona, which is considered largely fictional, Corona was bound to two bent [palm trees](#) and torn apart as the trunks were released.

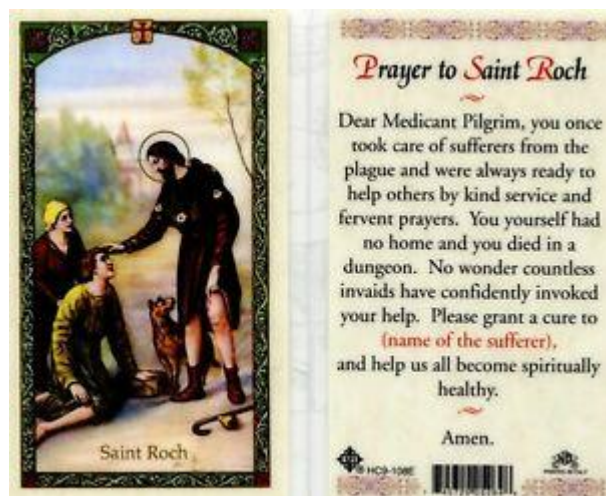
Victor and Corona's memorial day is 24 November (11 November in the [Orthodox church calendar](#)). Their feast day is 14 May. Outside the town of [Feltre](#) in northern Italy, on the slopes of Mount Miesna, is the church of SS. Vittore e Corona, erected by the [Crusaders](#) from Feltre

after the [First Crusade](#).

Corona is especially venerated in [Austria](#) and eastern [Bavaria](#). She is invoked in connection with superstitions involving money, such as [gambling](#) and treasure hunting.

Noting that last statement about her patronage, there are no reliable references on any Catholic sites that she is the patron against viruses and/or pandemics. So, if she is not, which Saint is, at least for us in the *Western* part of the Church? A quick search (reliable of course) brings up two: St Roch, an early 14<sup>th</sup> century native of Montpellier France, who cared for, with resultant miraculous cures of, plague sufferers as he journeyed towards Rome. Stricken himself, upon his recovery, he returned to Montpellier, whereupon being taken for a spy, was thrown into prison, where he died five years later. He is the

patron against pestilence and plague ó and dogs as well.



The other, from our own historically distant roots, is St Edmund, Martyr, 9<sup>th</sup> century King of East Anglia. In addition to being the patron Saint of kings, St Edmund is also the patron Saint of pandemics. And, while we're on St Edmund, now that you are prepared to correct gently the curiously exciting but incorrect contention that St Corona is the patron Saint of pandemics, did you know that St Edmund is the original patron Saint of England, not St George? In fact, there have been three. Between St Edmund and St George, St Edward the Confessor was the patron of England. And just like the ðfake newsö about St Corona, one must be careful in ðgooglingö information about the patron Saints of England. It's a bit like the ðcorrectö recipe for simnel cake, which we enjoyed on our last community Mass here in Sydney ó Lent 4. It seems every village in England has a different recipe for that rich, dark fruit cake; and, of course, their recipe is the only *correct* one. Further, simnel cake is undeniably connected with the Fourth Sunday in Lent (Laetare Sunday, Mid-Lent Sunday, Refreshment Sunday, Mothering Sunday);

however, as it makes its way back into popularity ó the idea of Mothering Sunday and simnel cake, having disappeared from the Catholic radar in 1920 in England (though many Church of England parishes kept the tradition alive) ó it is now being connected to Easter Day rather than its historical place on the Fourth Sunday of Lent. Again, ðgooglingö will result in varying opinions, many of which appear to be of dubious historical accuracy.

With the patron Saints of England, some historical societies in England just skip right over St Edward the Confessor. And, to be sure, there was considerable overlap, inevitably so in that there was no instant means of communication, and as we know well, loyalties can be fiercely defended, sometimes for generations.



While there are certainly many other Catholic Saints who are patrons of many and varied illnesses, St Edmund's patronage is specifically that of pandemics. St Edmund, pray for us, and for all of the victims of the current pandemic.



Ó GOD, the Father of all, look down in pity on those who suffer, and heal the anguish of the world; release from the prison-house all held in the bondage of fear, and set free such as are bound by the fetters of disease, whether of soul or body. Do thou care for the desolate, give rest to the weary, comfort the sorrowful, watch by the sleepless, and to those who lie untended in their sickness grant the gentle ministry of angels, to supply their needs and relieve their pain. Visit with thy great compassion all in their last agony and bring them in peace and safety into thy Paradise of love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.