

By MICHAEL MORRISSEY

SUNDERLAND this week formally adopted as its patron saint **St Benedict Biscop, who founded the north east city 1,300 years ago.**

The Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, Kevin Dunn, was among faith leaders who attended the ceremony at St Peter's Church, Sunderland this week, and the move could be set to inspire other towns and cities across the country to 'adopt' their own patron saints.

"Our research shows that it is rare in modern times for a city to adopt a saint as its patron," said city council marketing manager Julie Elliott.

"Edinburgh, Glasgow and Portsmouth have their own saints, so do dioceses. But other major cities do not appear to have adopted saints."

Heritage

Asked if the move had come from Christians among Sunderland's council members or the fact that the city is seeking world heritage status for the monasteries built at both Sunderland and Jarrow in the seventh century, Ms Elliott said: "It's a bit of both."

A council statement said St Benedict Biscop, who is known to Catholics as St Benet and is credited with introducing stained glass windows to British churches, is "one of the most powerful influences on Christian and cultural heritage world-

wide."

The saint founded the monastery as an internationally important centre of faith and learning. He also developed the first stone-built church in Northumbria and St Peter's became the birthplace of stained glassmaking in Britain.

This is now celebrated by the nearby National Glass Centre, which supports the exploration, creation and promotion of glass.

St Benet is also held to have introduced the idea of singing in churches, which was originally a Roman tradition, and was the mentor for the Venerable Bede, the famous Christian scholar who studied at the monastery.

St Benet's primary school, Sunderland, marked the occasion by asking Bishop Dunn to unveil a stained glass panel.



Youngsters are inspired to evangelise

YOUNG people from across England and Wales braved the January frosts last week to take part in an inspirational youth evangelisation training programme.

Organised by the Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation, the three-day event took place at the House of the Open Door Community in Broadway, Worcestershire. The brainchild of Beccy Burke, co-leader of the

Ezekiel Project, a dynamic youth mission of Northampton Diocese, the gathering aimed to explore what is distinctive about a Catholic understanding of evangelisation and how that might be used in a youth context.

"The group of young people that gathered were absolutely excellent," said CASE team member Clare Ford. "They are a really bright sign of hope to the Church and the world."

WHAT THE SECULAR MEDIA SAYS

THE oldest Anglican church in Japan has been razed in an arson attack by a parishioner. It is the latest disaster to befall the Yokohama church, one of the country's most unlucky, but resolute landmarks. The fire was the fourth time that the neo-Gothic building has been destroyed in its 140 year history. (*The Times*)

THE Church of England saw a 'small but significant' increase in attendance in 2003, a sign that its long-term decline may have slowed. Officials said the figures were signs of genuine growth, but critics warned its future remained bleak as it was failing to attract young people. (*Daily Telegraph*)

NEW Government targets to halve mercury emissions caused by metal fillings in teeth are expected to push up the price of cremations sharply. Funeral directors estimate that the average cost of cremation will increase by £100 to £1,315. (*Daily Telegraph*)

DOCTORS have criticised *Vera Drake*, the film that portrays a 1950s backstreet abortionist, for demonstrating an abortion technique that could result in copy-cat deaths among expectant mothers. The eponymous heroine of Mike Leigh's film aborts foetuses by injecting soapy water into the wombs of young girls. (*Daily Telegraph*)

Devoted to the Lord: (l-r) Stephen Davies of Liverpool Archdiocese, Pete Emmott of Worth Abbey Centre for Spirituality and James Coulborn of Youth 2000 discuss the importance of personal witness and holiness. (Alex Dobinson of the Ezekiel Project is on the extreme right)

1 bedroom: 70
2 bedroom: 81
3 bedroom: 94

- Just 5 minutes from James and each apartment balconies with wonderful views of Apparition Hill and the sea
- Fully fitted with new kitchen, cooker, dishwasher, microwave
- Air conditioning and central heating
- Marble floors in bathroom
- Polished oak flooring in living areas
- High quality doors, window fittings, including power windows
- Connections for satellite TV and Internet
- Includes door-answer system



Ellis Prop
Contact us for catalogue

TSUNAMI LITTLE WAY

The Little Way Association has received numerous letters requesting urgent financial assistance for the hundreds of thousands of people made homeless in the tsunami disaster. Over 160,000 people are expected to rise. More than six million children and adults have lost their possessions, food, clothing, clean water, their livelihoods. Poor fisher folk in his parish who have lost loved ones, mostly the residents of slum and squatter settlements, are homeless and jobless.

PLEASE SEND A DONATION

Your gift, no matter how small, will be gratefully received. **WITHOUT DEDUCTION** to missionaries on the ground who provide food, clean water, blankets, clothing, cooking facilities for the traumatised tsunami victims in Sri Lanka, India and other stricken areas.

YOUR GIFT COULD SAVE A LIFE AND...

Crossed POs & cheques should be sent & made payable to:
THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION U/01/16
119 Cedars Road, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel. 020-7622 0466

I enclose £..... to be allocated for:-
£..... TSUNAMI DISASTER APPEAL
£..... PHILIPPINES TYPHOON APPEAL
£..... WORLD HUNGER / £..... NEEDY CHILDREN
£..... MAINTENANCE OF LITTLE WAY SISTERS & SEMINAR
£..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN. EXPENSES/£..... THE EU
DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss).....
(Please print name)
Address