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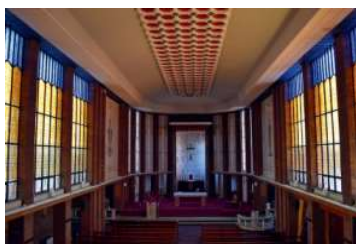
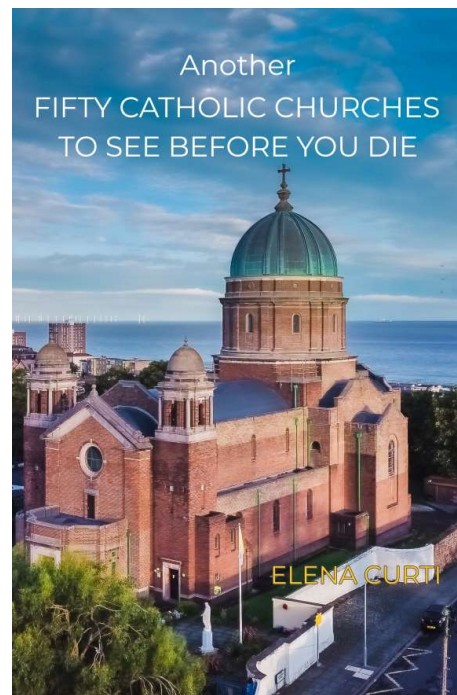
Another Fifty Catholic Churches to See Before You Die

Elena Curti

Some of the finest Catholic churches in England and Wales are winning recognition and a new lease of life.

The cream of them feature in *Another Fifty Catholic Churches to See Before You Die* (Gracewing £14.99). This beautifully illustrated book continues Elena Curti's exploration of historic churches, and her mission to make them better-known and appreciated. It is a follow-up to her first, best-selling volume, *Fifty Catholic Churches to See Before You Die*, published in 2020.

Elena, a journalist at *The Tablet* for many years, has chosen 50 more personal favourites which, taken together, give the backdrop to the story of Catholicism in England and Wales. The fifty churches are listed alphabetically by location, with history, architecture and artistic highlights. Each has a compelling story, peopled by courageous old Catholic families, visionary priests and religious orders, local patrons, and poor Irish migrants who contributed their pennies, and often their labour, to raise their places of worship. At the end of each entry Elena lists many more places of worship in the vicinity that are 'worth a detour'. Also included are biographical notes of the principal architects and artists, and a glossary of architectural terms.



Elena's selection includes:

SS Peter, Paul and Philomena, New Brighton (1935)

Rising proudly from the highest point on the Wirral peninsula, this is the church shown on the cover of the book. It was nicknamed 'The Dome of Home' in the Second World War by merchant seamen who used it as a navigational point of reference.

Our Lady and St Columba, Wallsend (1957)

Gothic and Art Deco influences combine in this building designed by architects who were renowned in the North East for their churches and cinemas..

Cathedral Church of SS Peter and Paul, Clifton, Bristol (1973)

England's only Brutalist cathedral, and a demonstration of architectural daring in the genteel Georgian quarter of the city.

St Luke, Pinner, London (1957)

Renowned twentieth century architect F.X. Velarde conveys the sheer joy of the faith in his use of colour, gold leaf and geometric shapes.

St Mary, Great Yarmouth (1850)

This Gothic-Revival church is a beacon of hope in the heart of this poor town. Fifty nationalities are represented in the congregation, which made a monumental effort to replace the roof, aided with a grant from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund.

St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham (1841)

The spirit of A. W. N. Pugin lives on in the first Catholic cathedral to be built in England after the Reformation





Elena Curti says: ‘Once again, exploring the Catholic churches of England and Wales has been a revelation. I have stood where the martyrs themselves celebrated Mass, visited early legal post-Reformation chapels with their understated exteriors, then seen the creations of wealthy patrons in the nineteenth century, who dreamt of the conversion of England. The great churches of the 1950s and 60s capture the excitement of liturgical change in the air, and with it a spirit of adventure in church design.



‘Who would have thought that the Covid pandemic which brought so much misery and hardship has, in the end, brought benefits to 39 churches that were awarded £6.6m from the Culture Recovery Fund. It is hugely heartening to visit so many churches sensitively restored. The other side of the coin is that beautiful places of worship with very small congregations are still closing, while others are vulnerable as they have no resident priest. Imaginative thinking, as well as resources, is needed to save these buildings. I hope this will be the Church’s goal as it prepares to mark the 200th anniversary of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 2029.’



Praise for *Fifty Catholic Churches to See Before You Die*

‘Not a moment to be lost in the treasure hunt to enjoy this superb architectural selection.’

Christopher Howse, *Daily Telegraph*



‘As a guide, Curti’s text and tone are pitch-perfect. History, architecture, art, local quirks, and eccentric individuals fill every page, alongside beautiful colour illustrations. Her book is already sitting with Simon Jenkins’s in our car glove compartment, ready for our next “churching” day out.’

Peter Stanford, *Church Times*

‘Composed with panache and acute sensitivity, Curti’s book bears superb witness to the beauty of these churches and provides an invaluable guide for those interested in exploring the architectural wonders of the Catholic Church.’

Philip Crispin, *Independent Catholic News*



‘In *Fifty Churches* she shows a knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, her subject which is utterly infectious.’

Paul Marsden, *Faith Magazine*



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