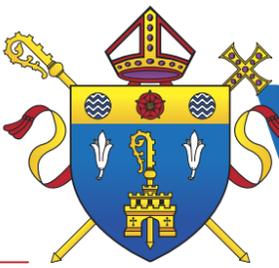


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# The Catholic VOICE of Lancaster



The Official Newspaper to  
the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 319 + May '20

**INSIDE:** p04 What is Conflict?  
p12 What an Impact!

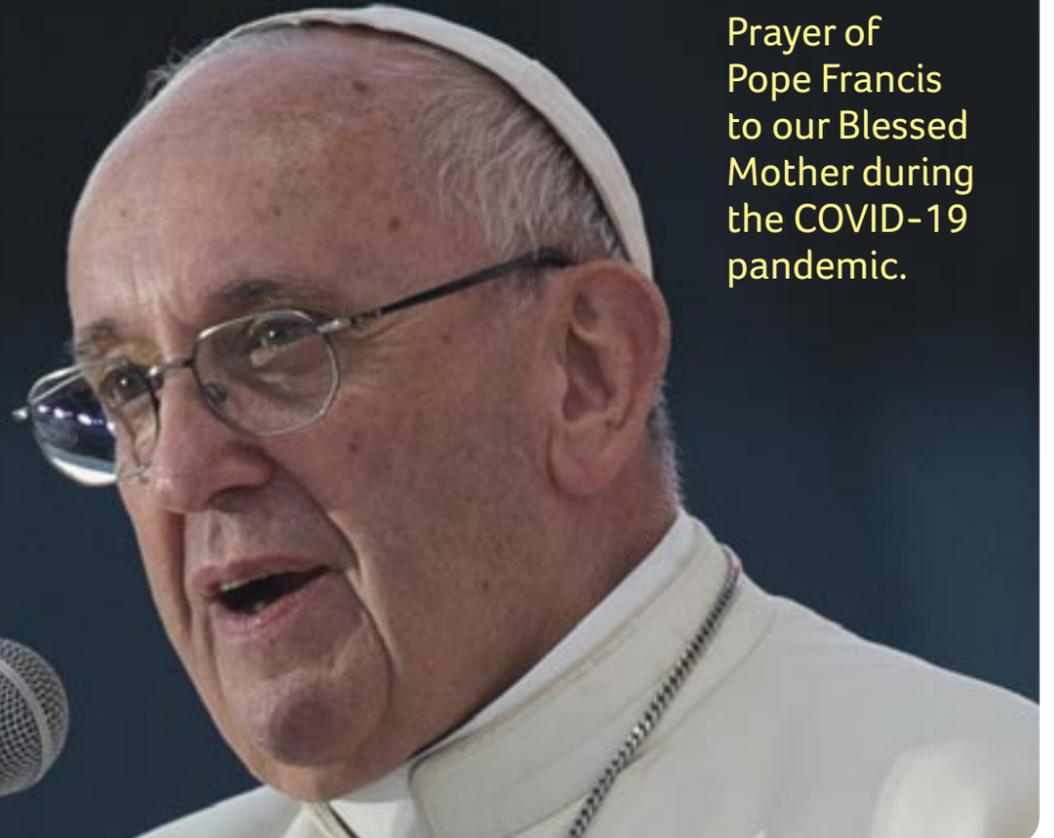


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## Hold Fast, Stand Firm!

*O Mary, you always shine on our path  
as a sign of salvation and of hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,  
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain,  
keeping your faith firm.  
You, Salvation of the Roman People,  
know what we need,  
and we are sure you will provide  
so that, as in Cana of Galilee,  
we may return to joy and to feasting  
after this time of trial.  
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform to the will of the Father  
and to do as we are told by Jesus,  
who has taken upon himself our  
sufferings and carried our sorrows  
to lead us, through the cross,  
to the joy of the resurrection.  
Amen*

Prayer of  
Pope Francis  
to our Blessed  
Mother during  
the COVID-19  
pandemic.



“  
**Dear sister, dear brother,  
even if in your heart you  
have buried hope, do not  
give up: God is greater.  
Darkness and death do  
not have the last word.  
Be strong, for with God  
nothing is lost!**

Pope Francis ”



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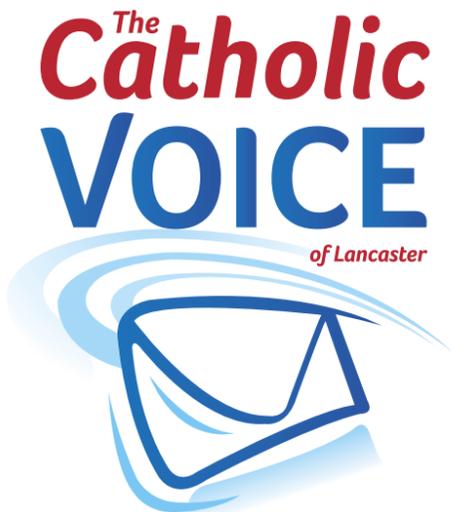
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**EDITORIAL**

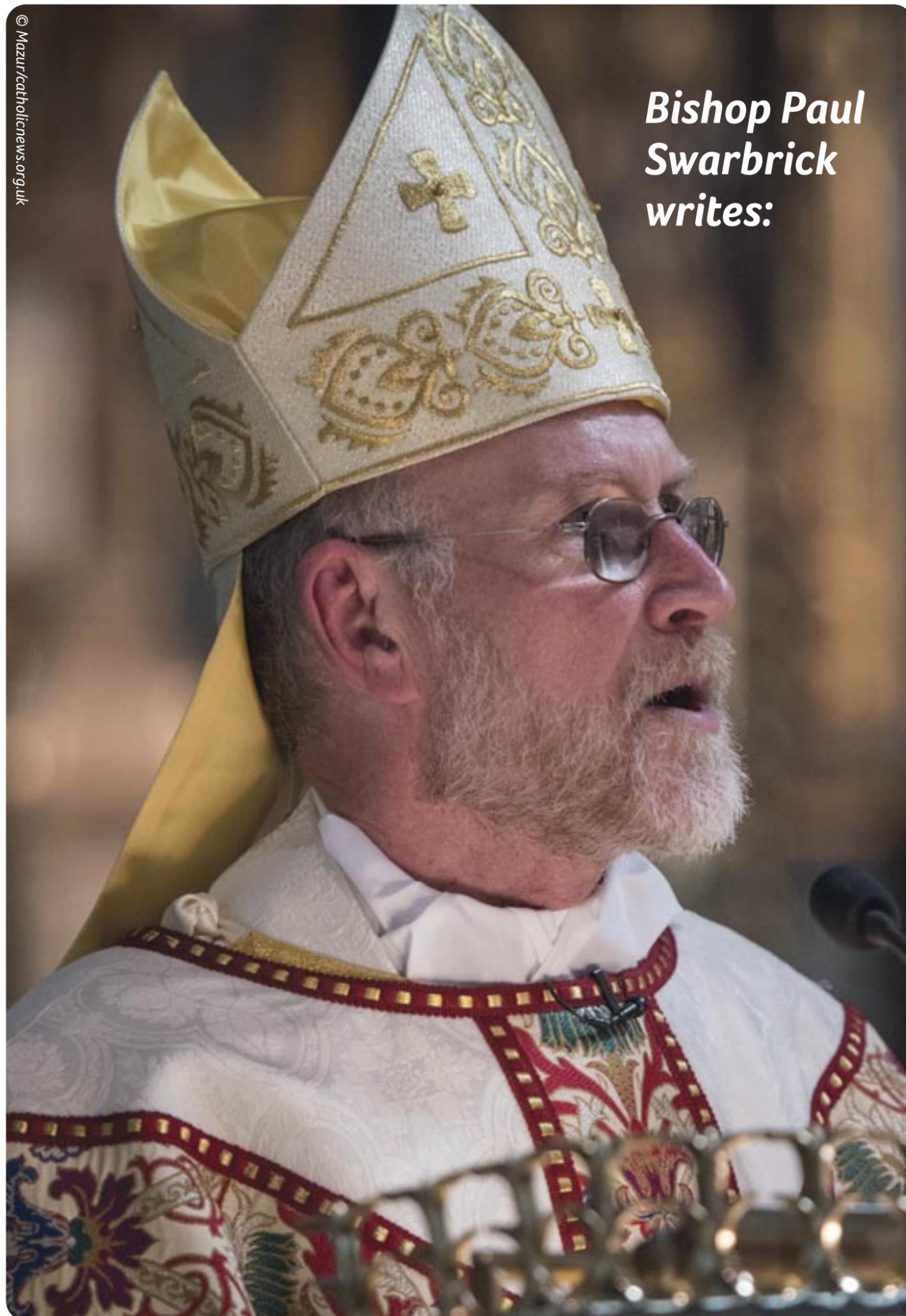
**T**he Gospels tell us that the apostles were afraid and were in the upper room with the door locked – but Jesus came into their presence and said ‘peace be with you’.

Today our church doors are closed and we are confined behind our front doors – but Jesus is ready to come into our presence and enter our hearts with his peace.

Until a few weeks ago it was true to say for most of us there were not enough hours in the day for us to achieve all we were setting out to do but now there seems to be so many hours that we are struggling to fill our time. There is now time to observe the wonders of nature; watch the flowers grow and the trees coming

into bud and blossom; watch the birds nesting and listen to them singing their little hearts out; spending quality time with children and maybe even sharing meals together as a family. Normal daily activities have ground to an almost halt and a stillness and silence permeates our otherwise bustling and noise filled existence.

The *Catholic Voice* encourages readers to take advantage of these quiet times and use everyday to let the peace of Christ enter our hearts. A period of prayer, contemplation, reflecting on the scriptures or reading the lives of the saints will help introduce a daily conversation with the Lord that will allow that true peace to be bring us closer to Him.



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**Bishop Paul Swarbrick writes:**

**For the first time in its 29 year history this edition of the Catholic Voice will only be available electronically.**

**It would be easy to begin by focussing on the problem dominating the news, but that temptation must be resisted. Not long ago the news was dominated by another subject; BREXIT. We got tired of it, made a joke of it, prayed for it to go away, and now look! Living in the world we are affected by the course of current events to a greater or lesser degree, but, as people of Faith, our roots are found in richer soil.**

I am writing this as we approach the end of Easter Week. My news is dominated by the fact that Jesus is risen from the dead, and has come back to us. He has not brought a detailed description of 'life on the other side'. Rather, He brings a simple, one-word message, 'Peace!'. Before His Passion and the immediate horrors of Holy Week, He gave explicit teaching on the nature of His peace, giving important details in a passage recorded by St. John.

*'Peace I bequeath to you, My own peace I give you. A peace the world cannot give, this is My gift to you.'* John 14:27

His gift of His peace was not just for those disciples at that time. It is for us, and for these times, and for all times.

To be caught up in a national emergency taking place within a global crisis is new ground for many of us. Knowing how to cope, how to respond, how to plan can be daunting. Having said that, there is something very attractive when I realise that, as a Catholic Christian, I am asked to do nothing new; only have faith in Christ. Remember that Faith, return to that Faith, look after that Faith, practise that Faith.

There will be personal, social and economic consequences caused by the pandemic that will take years to adjust to. Loss of family members, lost jobs, lost businesses create a new landscape within which we will have to live. At the moment, the streets are strangely quiet and, on the face of it, peaceful, but we are aware too of intense activity and anxiety in health care, in hospitals and care homes, to whom we owe a huge debt of thanks. More broadly, mental health cries out for attention. We are conscious of isolated, hidden individuals, silently struggling with all the uncertainties of Covid-19.

Politicians, leaders and scientists grapple with how to manage society in order to protect social order so that we come through the next weeks and months as well as possible. We are living in fog, and can as yet only speculate on how long it will be before it begins to thin and lift. Even then, we don't know if it will return.

The Church is the guardian and keeper of the Easter Mysteries. The relevance of these Mysteries brings reassurance not only to ourselves as believers. The soul is beyond the reach of this particular virus. Whilst we follow the instructions to STAY AT HOME : PROTECT THE NHS : SAVE LIVES, we remember the gift of the life of the Spirit. It is a reality easily lost sight of if we allow ourselves to become dominated by news headlines.

Our Blessed Lord patiently waits for us to remember, rediscover and return.

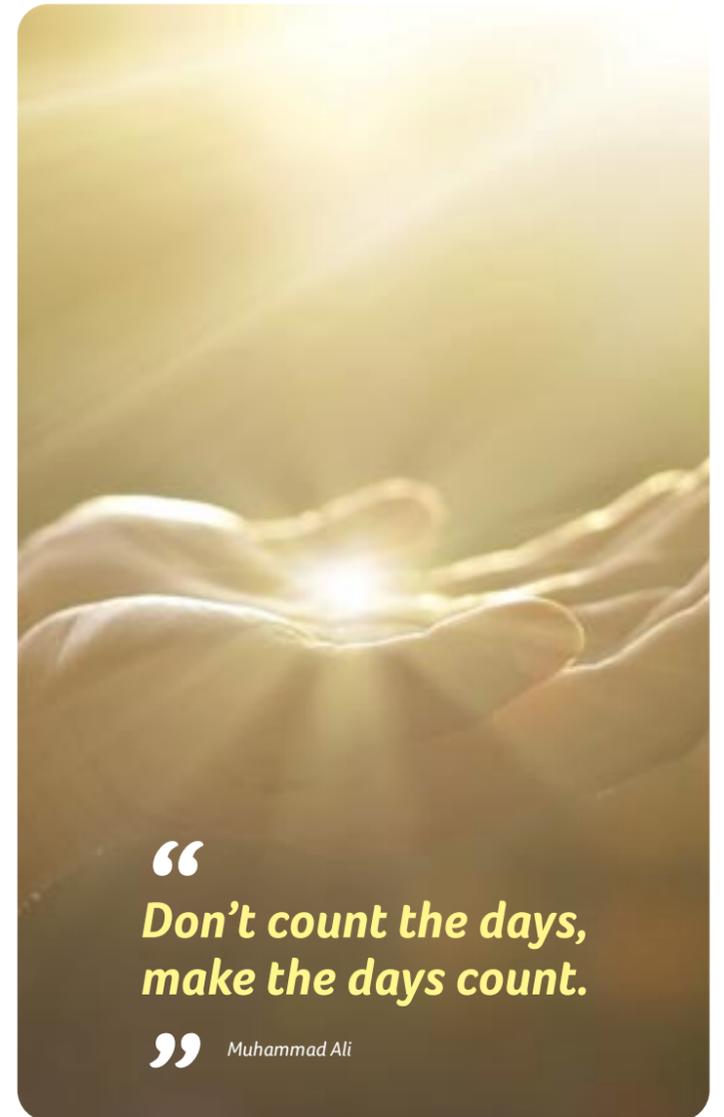
Prayer at home is being given a new lease of life. Please God, this will be a happy and lasting legacy of the crisis. Through various means efforts are being made throughout the parishes of the Diocese to look after each other and keep us true to pastoral care. This is not solely the responsibility of the clergy, although they obviously have to be active in many new ways. I am grateful for all being done in families to help keep us faithful to preserving Sunday as the Lord's Day. With so much 'on offer' via the internet it is important to use discretion regarding what we turn to and what we use. But there are vast numbers of parishioners who either cannot or prefer not to use online aids. We cannot presume this service is available to everyone. The wise pastor does not 'put all his eggs in one basket'!

I am immensely grateful for all who are simply going about the business of doing whatever they can to make sure our diocese, parishes and schools continue to function. Education, Tribunal, Health, Safeguarding, Finance, Property, Websites and *Catholic Voice* all still require attention. I commend those parishioners who have arranged to make their financial contributions through Direct Debit. *(It would be wonderful if even more changed to this arrangement!)* I thank God for our convents, engaged in various apostolates within the Diocese, all witnessing to the beauty of Religious Life. May they continue to shine as beacons of joy in the Risen Lord.

Please keep our seminarians in your prayers. They are in very unusual circumstances, and could easily find this unwelcome disturbance to their formation troubling. Pray for Stuart Chapple due to be ordained deacon in June, for Philip Wrigley in his fourth year of formation, Simon Marley two terms into his pro-paedeutic year at Valladolid, Spain, and for James Knight undergoing an extended time of discernment at St. Clare's, Preston. Dare to hope for an increase of vocations to the Priesthood as a fruit of our present sacrifices.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to thank you for the many expressions of support and encouragement I have received. Enforced isolation comes with certain consolations, and I am fortunate to live in generous accommodation with pleasant gardens, thanks to the hard work and foresight of Bishop Campbell. As a Diocese we were already facing the need to make adjustments. Present constraints only emphasise the need for decisions. All will be done with God's guidance, and in order for us to continue living our Faith, carrying the unchanging Good News of Christ's Resurrection into the days ahead. We have the example of those who have gone before us, those who have completed their work. The Lord calls us on, to follow Him with charity and prayer in the Light of Easter.

With my blessing for each of you,  
+ Paul, Bishop of Lancaster



“  
**Don't count the days,  
make the days count.**

” Muhammad Ali

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**What is conflict? This was the main question that students in three of our diocesan schools were asked during a visit from Pax Christi, an international Catholic peace movement.**

**A**isling Griffin, the Schools and Youth Education Officer for Pax Christi UK, visited St Cecilia's RC High School, Longridge, St Bede's Catholic High School, Lytham and Our Lady's Catholic High School, Preston over three days in January hosted by youth worker Terry Mattinson.

The sessions with the students began with a collaborative game to make sure that everyone was awake and ready to work together! Exploring the issue of conflict and using 'conflict trees' to visualise the roots and outcomes of violence, students discussed what conflict looks like, what causes conflict and how we can use this information to work for peace.

The sessions brought up many different elements of conflict and peace, ranging from the global, with military tensions and fake news, to the more personal, with discussions on bullying and mental health.

Using the identified themes they came together as a group to formulate ideas of things that people can do to work for

peace in their daily lives, including learning to listen to others and being kind to one another. The students were open and receptive to the discussions, giving some really thought-provoking and insightful responses, and were challenged to put some of the ideas that they had thought of into practice.

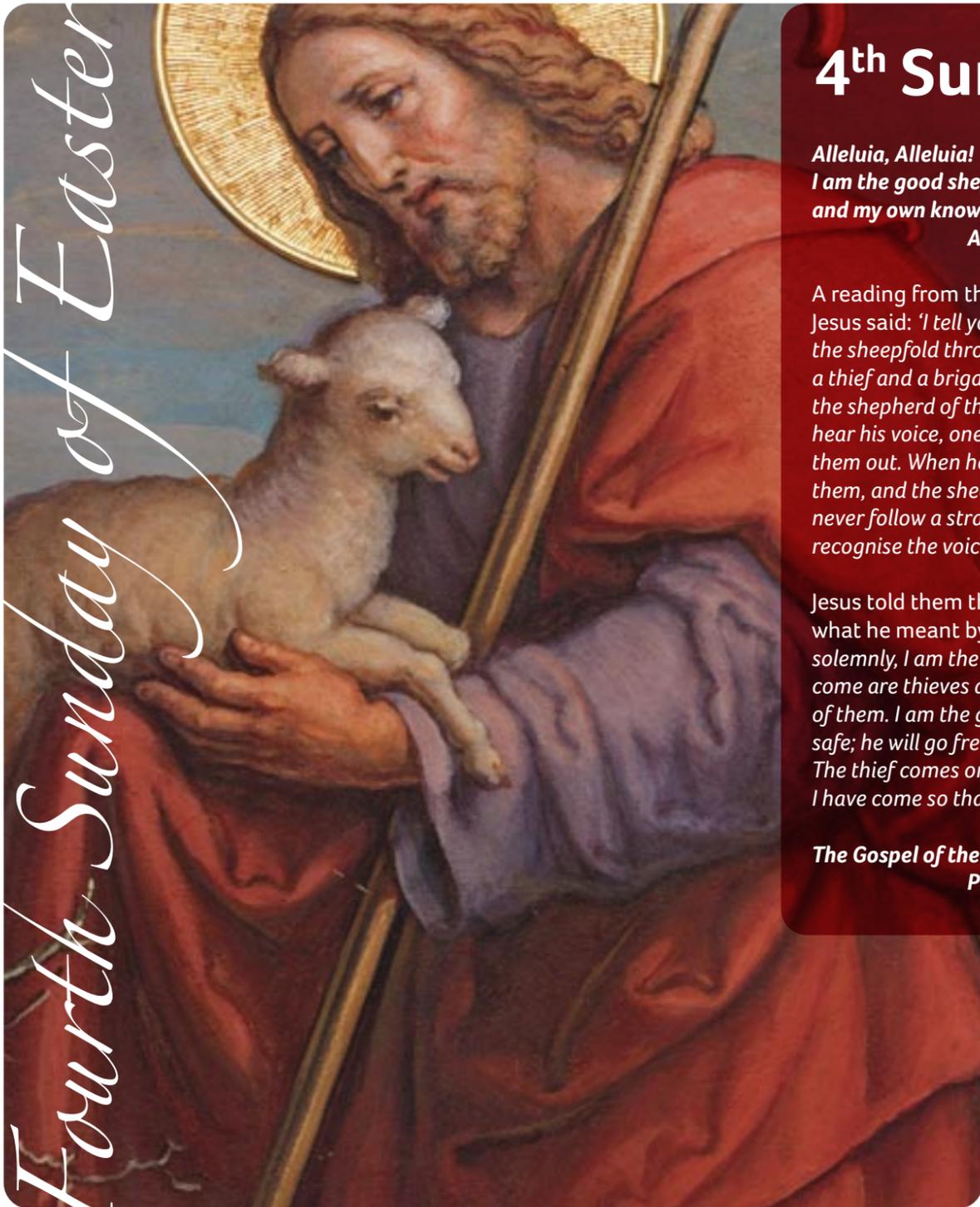
Aisling also had the chance to meet the IMPACT youth group and was impressed by their commitment to social justice issues and the work that they are doing in the local community. Many thanks also go to the Xaverian Missionaries for hosting Aisling at their new Spirituality centre in Fulwood. We look forward to working together again in the future!

*Terry Mattinson*

If you would like more information, please contact either Aisling at [education@paxchristi.org.uk](mailto:education@paxchristi.org.uk) or Terry at [terry.mattinson@live.co.uk](mailto:terry.mattinson@live.co.uk)

*What is*

# Conflict?



# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**Alleluia, Alleluia!**  
*I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep, and my own know me.*  
**Alleluia!**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (10: 1-10)  
 Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them again: 'I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe; he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life to the full.'

**The Gospel of the Lord**  
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

## +++ HOMILY ++++++

**O**n the Fourth Sunday of Easter, we hold before us Christ, the Good Shepherd. In the midst of the present pandemic I was struck by the words of Psalm 22, 'If I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff, with these you give me comfort'. Christ stands in the midst of us in these times of darkness.

Unlike paid servants, unlike the false prophets who conjure up illusory promises of self-fulfilment and who 'thieve and kill and destroy', Christ gives us real comfort. When everything else is shaken to the ground, Christ still stands before us with his crook and staff. The Gospel speaks of how He knows us, and counts us in and out of the sheepfold each day, one by one. None of us are anonymous before Christ, none of us are one amongst many; rather, all of us are known by Christ personally, and His desire is to give each one of us life and life to the full.

The Good Shepherd feeds his sheep and leads them to the running streams and fresh and abundant pastures, enabling us to slake our deepest thirst and deepest hunger. And what is that deepest thirst and hunger? Anyone who has visited any of the Missionary of Charity homes will find a sign next to the crucifix, 'I thirst'. Mother Teresa explained that Christ gasped 'I thirst' from the cross. But Jesus's thirst was far more than a physical thirst for water; it was a thirst for you and for me. The Good Shepherd has become the Lamb of sacrifice, giving His life for our life. There is a wonderful scene in John's Gospel

when Jesus stands up and cries out, 'If any man is thirsty, come to me! Let the man come and drink who believes in me!' The evangelist goes on to explain that from His breast 'shall flow fountains of living water', an allusion to the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive.

Despite the valley of darkness that we find ourselves living in, this vale of tears, we can be sure that this is a time of grace too. Christ stands in our midst and breathes His Spirit upon us. It has been extraordinary to see the many creative and beautiful ways with which people have responded to these times becoming in turn good shepherds to others: painting rainbows in their windows, overcoming their fear of technology in order to be connected to one another, reaching out to neighbours and strangers alike with gestures of kindness, singing together over Zoom, praying together in spiritual communion, and the selfless dedication of many people who work in our health service and other essential services, keeping our nation moving.

For all of us who follow the call of the Good Shepherd, the Lord is leading us to a new place, the quiet waters, and perhaps for the first time, revealing to us in a new way, the deepest longing that we have in our hearts. St Peter addresses each of us when he says, 'You had gone astray like sheep but now you are coming back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls'. Let us pray that what we are discovering in these times may change our lives forever.

*Fr Philip Conner, VF, Lancaster*

**If any man is thirsty, come to me! Let the man come and drink who believes in me!**

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Fifth Sunday of Easter

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**Alleluia, Alleluia!**  
Jesus said: **"I am the Way the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me."**  
**Alleluia!**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (14:1-12)  
Jesus said to his disciples:

*'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am now going to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the place where I am going.'*

Thomas said, 'Lord we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you know my Father too. From this moment you know him

and have seen him.'

Philip said, 'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' 'Have I been with you all this time Philip?' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me?'

*'To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself; it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.'*

*I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father'*

**The Gospel of the Lord**  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

## +++ HOMILY ++++++

***"I tell you most solemnly whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father."***

**H**ow can we perform greater works than the Lord who worked miracles: healing the sick, calming the storm, multiplying the loaves and fish, feeding the multitudes, raising the dead, and forgiving sins? We can't do any of these things, can we - we who are imperfect, sinful, and full of doubt?

he was saying. Doubting Thomas and inquisitive Philip both sum them up: "how can we know the way?....show us a little bit more to satisfy us." If they who walked with him, ate with him, and witnessed his works were like this then surely we have a right to feel at least the same as they did?

The key to understanding his words comes at the very end of the Gospel when he says "because I am going to the Father."

Again we need to look further at his words: "believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason." Look around and see the effects of the Holy Spirit in the world.

From Heaven the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit upon the Church to empower us to continue the work of the Son until the end of time. Filled with the Holy Spirit, together we are empowered to perform the same works as Jesus, and even greater. If you don't believe it look around and see the effects of the Holy Spirit in the world. Who would have thought after the death of Jesus, and even in the early days of the Church, that the Faith would have spread like this? This was no accident or fluke.

On our own we may feel quite useless but as members of the Body of Christ we are not alone. Christ lives in me and lives in you. We all have different parts to play in this great mystery. Some are more visible than others but we should be careful not to rank them in order of importance. The sick praying on their sick beds and offering up their suffering with Christ's are performing just as vital a work as the active missionaries out in the fields.

We are in good company if we feel useless and inadequate. The disciples of Jesus were troubled and confused by what

There are many works to perform just as there are many rooms in the Father's house. *Fr James Burns, VF, Blackpool*

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+++++ HOMILY +++++

# 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**Alleluia, Alleluia!**

**Jesus said: 'If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him'**

**Alleluia!**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (14: 15-21)  
 Jesus said to his disciples: 'If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know

him, because he is with you, he is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Anyone who receives my commandments and keep them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him.'

**The Gospel of the Lord  
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

In St Peter's Basilica in Rome there are many works of art to be admired, but more importantly they can be a stimulus for prayer and contemplation. Michelangelo's Pietà is an obvious example. When I have visited the Basilica my attention is always drawn to the east end where, above the Chair of St Peter, the Cathedra Petri, Bernini's magnificent alabaster window depicting the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove is situated. His ingenious use of light is at its brightest at the heart of the window, revealing the Holy Spirit to be the source of divine light and luminous grace.

I am reminded of all this by Jesus' words in today's Gospel, where he describes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth whom Jesus promises to ask the Father to send to us as an Advocate. The setting for Jesus' words in St John's Gospel is the Last Supper, those last few hours he spent with his disciples, teaching them in what is often described as his 'Farewell Discourse'. Knowing he had only a short time with them before enduring his Passion and Death, we can see how he would want to direct their minds to what is really crucial, what is essential, in how they should live after his return to the Father.

Bernini's pointing to the Holy Spirit as the source of divine light is akin to Jesus' description of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth. To live the Truth is to live in the light of God's grace. Jesus, the Light of the World, reveals himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and the Holy Spirit communicates this Truth to us and enables us to live by ...



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 Sizer Street, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 7DR  
 Headteacher: Annalisa Howarth  
 Assistant Headteacher: Mr Bridge  
 T: 01772 556 002  
 E: [head@englishmartyrs.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:head@englishmartyrs.lancs.sch.uk)  
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 Judged to have an Outstanding Catholic Life Section 48, March 18

  
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**6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER HOMILY CONTINUED... ++++++**

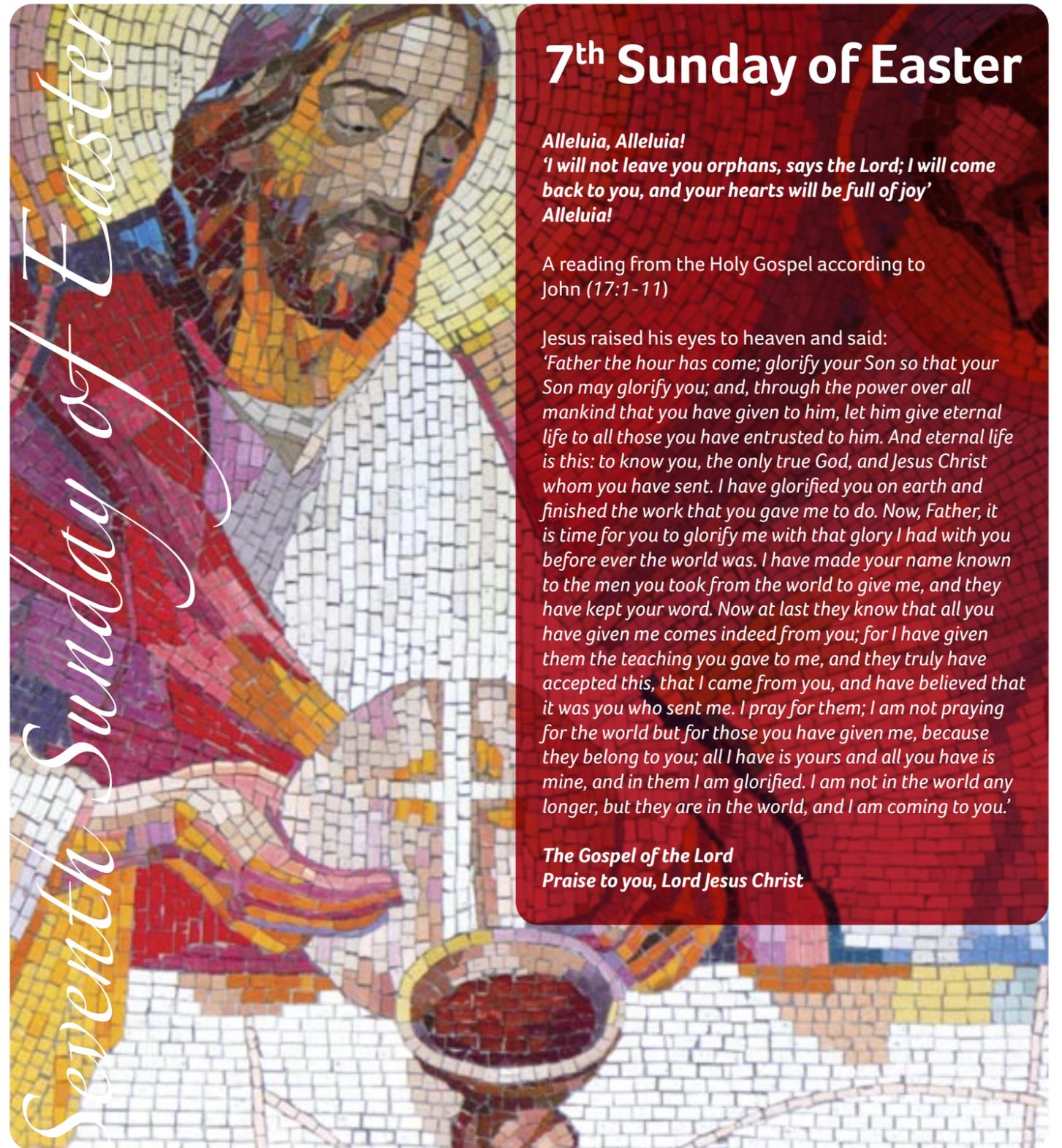
its light. Jesus says to us today, 'If you love me you will keep my commandments'. For St John the real test of this love is obedience. Jesus demonstrated his love for the Father by his obedience to his Father's will. So this love is not sentimentality, rather it has moral force and is demonstrated by obedience.

We know real love is not easy. Hence Jesus' promise of the Holy

Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, as our 'Advocate', (*parakletos*), to assist us.

The standard Jesus sets us is very high. Indeed he says elsewhere, we must be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect, but he is sending us the Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfil his will, which always leads to our flourishing and fulfilment.

Canon Adrian J Towers, VF, Preston



**7th Sunday of Easter**

**Alleluia, Alleluia!**  
**'I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy'**  
**Alleluia!**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (17:1-11)

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:  
*'Father the hour has come; glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you; and, through the power over all mankind that you have given to him, let him give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him. And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have glorified you on earth and finished the work that you gave me to do. Now, Father, it is time for you to glorify me with that glory I had with you before ever the world was. I have made your name known to the men you took from the world to give me, and they have kept your word. Now at last they know that all you have given me comes indeed from you; for I have given them the teaching you gave to me, and they truly have accepted this, that I came from you, and have believed that it was you who sent me. I pray for them; I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me, because they belong to you; all I have is yours and all you have is mine, and in them I am glorified. I am not in the world any longer, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.'*

**The Gospel of the Lord**  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

**+++ HOMILY ++++++**

**T**alking on the phone sometime ago with a friend who is a nurse, she told me of a medic with whom she had worked in Africa. He had died whilst treating victims of some infectious disease epidemic. She said something to the effect that he had died doing the thing he loved to do the most: **servng people.** 'That was his greatest glory - that he could serve.'

Having just celebrated the Ascension of Our Lord and therefore, the end of his earthly ministry, and on the cusp of the Solemnity of Pentecost, today's Gospel passage catapults us back to the night of Jesus' Last Supper and to what has been called His High Priestly Prayer.

'Glory' figures in that prayer. The whole *raison d'être* of Christ was to give glory to the Father by obeying Him, and that obedient service was also Jesus' own glory. What was that service? 'To give eternal life to those entrusted to him' (17:2). The whole purpose of the Incarnation and therefore, the Death and Resurrection of Jesus was to regain eternal life for those entrusted to Him (*us*). His glory (*and that of the Father*) was achieved by him simply serving the will of the Father.

That takes us back to the medic whose glory we have been told, was to serve others. So the Gospel passage begs the question: wherein lies your glory? We recognise that Jesus has won for us the possibility of eternal life mediated to us through baptism (*the Easter Sacrament*) but we are called to live out that gift in a worthy manner. The example of the medic, and more importantly, that of Our Lord, is simply to serve the will of God in whatever situation we find ourselves.

In the example of Our Lady and the Apostles (*first reading Acts 1:12-14*) we see that prayer is the first act of service. And, St Peter (*second reading, first letter of St Peter 4:13-16*) reminds us that service always has a cost to it, some form of suffering: Putting others first and ourselves at the end of the line. When we learn to serve as Jesus served we make him present, the incarnation goes on through us, as does the work of redemption. Christ becomes present and his glory is achieved when we serve the other, the community and our family. Uniting ourselves in this way with Jesus now, one day, through the mercy of God, we shall be united with him in his eternal glory.

Canon Chris Loughran, VF, Carlisle

**The God Who Speaks cannot be heard, except by the People Who Listen.**

# The God who Speaks

**T**he Year of the Word has a subtitle: *'The God Who Speaks'*. That is the God whom we worship.

Sometimes it helps to take a step back from our familiar beliefs, and see the strangeness of them. What would *'the God who speaks'* have looked like, for example, to an ancient Greek? He or she would have known of gods who spoke, like Apollo, whose mouthpiece was a priestess, the oracle in Delphi. But he was one of a whole gang of gods, who acted like bigger, more powerful - and not especially nice - human beings. A few philosophers believed in a Supreme Deity, but they tended to see this as distant and impersonal, unconcerned with the details of our lives. Then along came the Jews, with their astonishing double claim: the One God is utterly *'Other'*, beyond time and space, the source of every created thing; yet this same God speaks to us intimately, and knows the tiny details of our lives. This Year of the Word can help us appreciate the astonishing gift of our faith.

The God of the Jews spoke, through the created world, through the history of his chosen people, through the words of his prophets. Christians inherited the story they told about God, and added a new chapter, the story of Jesus. Now God spoke not only to his chosen people, but to the whole world, and this through his Son, *'the reflection of God's glory and the impress of God's own being'* (Hebrews 1.3). His Son continues to speak,

through the stories retold by his followers, and, in the Spirit, through those followers themselves, collectively in the Church and also in its individual members.

The Scriptures are the witnesses of God's conversation with his Creation. The Bible is not a single book, but a double collection of small books, speaking, to quote again the Letter to the Hebrews (1:1) *'in many and various ways'*. These include folktales, history, prophecy, poems of praise, petition and lamentation, traditional wisdom, fiery apocalyptic and missionary and pastoral letters. They also include the four Gospels, which are unlike any other literature of their time: a mix of narrative and moral teaching, of theology and biography, making the unparalleled claims that their leading character spoke with the authority of God himself, and rose again from the dead.

For Christians, the Word of God is a person, not a book. Yet we can listen to him by listening to the words of the books that witness to him. For God speaks to us in many ways - through his creation and through human history; through our human reason and our experience; through the traditions of the Church and through prayer. When we read the Scriptures, then, we need to do so prayerfully, helped by the Church's liturgy and teaching, and intelligently, making use of the many accessible resources the experts provide. For the God Who Speaks cannot be heard, except by the People Who Listen. *Sr. Margaret Atkins*

  
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**W**e started our Bible themed World Book Day with a visit from Father Paul who told us about his favourite Bible Story – the conversion of St Paul.

Each class had a key Bible story to explore on the day and decorated their classroom doors to reflect this story.

Classes worked together on shared

reading, with Year 6 children creating their own Bible story books, posters and artworks to share with younger classes.

Some classes held Bible Quizzes and worked together to find out information about this amazing book.

Children brought in their own special Bibles from home and had time to read these with their friends.



# The Broughton Catholic Charitable Society

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In the late eighteenth century a Smallpox epidemic in the Broughton district of the Fylde, the most Catholic part of England's most Catholic county, resulted in much loss of life.

Many women survived due to having partial immunity gained from exposure to Cowpox; milking being a maid's job. Many of their men-folk were not so fortunate, leaving their families to cope with great hardship.

The community rallied to aid the survivors with money and manual labour. As the epidemic abated, the local Catholics continued to meet to arrange help for the needy and to have Masses said for the living and dead. In time, the idea formed of joining together as a permanent society. This came into being as the Broughton Catholic Charitable Society (BCCS) during a meeting at the Golden Ball, Broughton on Sunday 6 May 1787.

May 1787 was a momentous month: The First Fleet set sail to Australia from Portsmouth on 13 May; the Convention

to Draft the US Constitution first met in Philadelphia on 14 May. Happily, all three of these ventures have endured.

Every year since 1787 the BCCS has held its Annual General Meeting in the Broughton area on Whit Tuesday. This is preceded by a Mass, a splendid lunch, and a series of toasts. Other significant events are:

- The President's Mass followed by distribution of Alms.
- The President's term of office is one year, from AGM to AGM, the Mass is normally held in his/her home parish.
- A pre-Christmas Lunch with carolling.

From its foundation the objects of the Society have been the provision of spiritual benefits for its members, both living and dead, and to give alms for the relief of hardship wherever it is met.

### Spiritual Benefits

On notification that a member is close to death the Hon. Secretary will arrange for a Mass to be offered for the departing soul. On notification of the death of a

member, the Hon. Secretary will arrange for five Masses to be offered for the repose of their soul. Each priest member celebrates a Mass for living members on or about Whit Tuesday and a Mass for deceased members on or about All Souls. In addition one priest offers a monthly Mass for all dead members.

### Almsgiving

Petitions for alms on behalf of a worthy case of hardship may be made by members of at least one year's standing and are normally supported by a priest for consideration by the Board of Management. Each year six or so individual petitions are approved. In addition there are currently three ongoing five year commitments of funding to voluntary organisations which aim to:

- Support homeless people in Chorley.
- Resettle ex-offenders and reduce re offending in Preston.
- Provide supportive housing for young people in Lytham with complex needs to develop independence rather than a life of dependence.

### Membership

This is open to any Catholic priest or layperson, male or female, who is Lancashire born, or resident in Lancashire, or of Lancashire parentage, and in a sound state of health.

For practical purposes "Lancashire" is interpreted as the historic county and includes the Dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford and Shrewsbury.

The annual membership subscription is currently £10 (*minimum*) payable at Whitsun. Life membership is currently £200. A married person's subscription includes their spouse, who is able to continue the membership if the member should predecease them. Priest-Members do not pay subscriptions but contribute to members' spiritual benefits by the celebration of Masses.

New members are always most welcome. If you are interested in joining please visit the website at [broughtonsociety.co.uk](http://broughtonsociety.co.uk), contact Hon. Secretary, 13 Tanglewood, Preston, PR2 8WQ or tele phone 01772 655772. *John Lord, Preston*

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## What an Impact!

**H**i I'm Lois (16) and I'm Eden (14). With all the issues with the pandemic forcing us all into lockdown we felt we needed to help cheer people up. We realised that all the people in care homes will be struggling and upset since they are unable to have visitors.

For many years we have attended Preston Impact Youth Group and we have worked alongside Sherwood Care Home and Bethany House so we decided to help cheer them up since its Easter and they will be feeling lonely as ever. So, we made banners wishing them a Happy Easter and wishing them all the best. We hope we brought a smile to their faces and made sure they know that people are thinking of them and care for them all. As well as this we needed to acknowledge the amazing NHS workers. So we have made another banner dedicated to the NHS which is up on Sharoe Green Lane outside Costa. The NHS is amazing and need support and acknowledgement now more than ever. We have done these banners on behalf of Preston Impact Youth Groups.



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