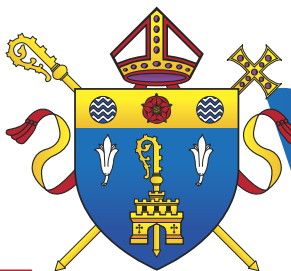


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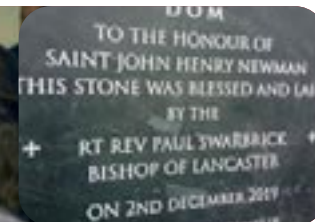
VOICE

of Lancaster

The Official Newspaper to
the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 316 + February '20

INSIDE: p02 Dowry of Mary Tour
p07 20 yrs of Tea & Chat
p12 Foundation Stone
Blessed



+ A YEAR OF THE WORD +

'The God who Speaks'

The year 2020 marks the 10th Anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's Verbum Domini (*The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on 'The Word of the Lord'*) and is also 1600 years since the death of the great lover of Scripture himself – St Jerome. Consequently, these anniversaries have inspired the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to dedicate 2020 as a pastoral year for Catholics in our countries to focus particularly on the Bible and 'The God who speaks'.

As this special Year of the Word unfolds, we are invited to allow our God in the Scriptures to renew and inspire, challenge and enliven

our families, our parishes and every aspect of our lives as individual disciples of the Lord. Once again, our faith calls to be nourished and fed as we sit at the Lord's feet and encounter His voice in the Sacred Scriptures.

This whole year is an invitation placed before us in our parishes, families and as individuals to come into a passionate dialogue with the Word of God in every context of lives and discipleship and to open our hearts anew to its treasures; to a re-found beauty and wholeness; to a new Springtime in our lives; to a new richness and maturity of faith through a strong and sustaining relationship with Christ. (Courtesy of the Diocesan website)

“
Ignorance of
the scriptures is
ignorance of Christ
”

St Jerome



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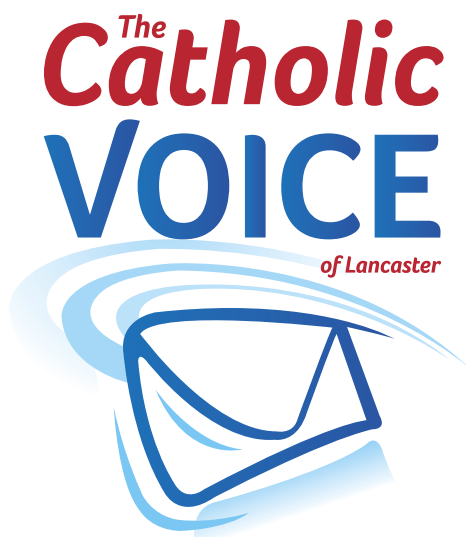
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The Catholic Voice of Lancaster is published on the last Sunday of the month previous to publication date.

The Catholic Voice of Lancaster is published by its owners. The Trustees of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lancaster, a registered charity, (No. 234331), and is wholly independent of and separate from any previous newspaper published by or on behalf of the diocese.

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PUBLISHED BY:

CathCom Ltd. N2 Blois Meadow
Business Centre, Blois Road, Steeple
Bumpstead, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 7BN
020 7112 6710
www.cathcom.org

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EDITORIAL

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world – *Hebrews 1 1:2*

Throughout the old and new testaments we have a rich tapestry of God's relationship with our world and mankind but how well do we know the scriptures and their context?

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... John 1:1 And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth... John 1:14

We have just celebrated the great feast of Christmas when God became man. Jesus was born of Mary and began His ministry here on earth. He came with the message of love and hope and throughout the Gospels of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are commentaries on His life, death and resurrection. Within these Gospels there are rich accounts of

the life of Jesus and the example he sets us.

..... a voice from the cloud said:

“This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him” – Matthew 17:5

Most of us will recognise this excerpt from the account of the Transfiguration in St Matthew's Gospel. Prior to the words being spoken to Peter, James, and his brother John a bright cloud overshadowed them. During this pastoral Year of the Word we need to let the bright cloud overshadow us so that our lives are transfigured in the example of Jesus.

The *Catholic Voice* encourages readers to take every opportunity to learn more about the scriptures so that the Word is proclaimed in all our daily lives.



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Dowry of Mary Tour Lancaster Cathedral 6-8 February *Everyone Welcome*

Thursday 6th February

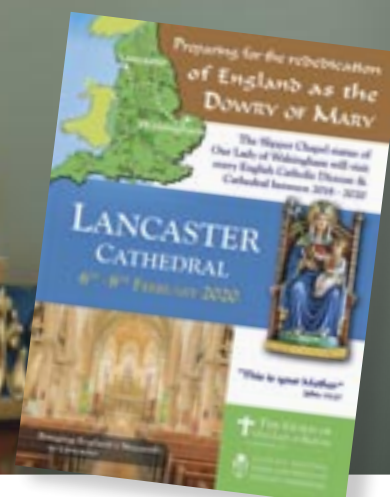
8.30am Cathedral opens
4.00pm Exhibition opens
Rosary and Litany
6.00pm Angelus, followed by
a talk on England's
Dowry of Mary
7.00pm Holy Mass (*Celebrant:*
Bishop Paul Swarbrick)
9.00pm Cathedral closes

Friday 7th February

8.30am Cathedral opens
9.45am Rosary and Sung Litany
10.30am Exhibition open for
private or group visits
Noon Angelus
12.15pm Holy Mass followed by
Eucharistic Adoration
6.00pm Angelus, followed by time
for private visits and
prayer
7.00pm Holy Mass with
opportunity for the
Sacrament of the Sick
8.45pm Cathedral closes

Saturday 8th February

8.30am Cathedral opens
9.15am Rosary and Litany
10.45am Led Eucharistic Adoration
with intercessions for
vocations
(*Confessions available*)
Noon Angelus
12.15pm Holy Mass (*Celebrant:*
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Exhibition closes



+ WORDS OF LOVE – A REFLECTION ON... + 'The God who Speaks'

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parable of
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“Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if you have to.”

” St Francis of Assisi

Of the many passages in the Bible about hearing the Word of God, one of the most descriptive is the Parable of the Sower. It so captured the imagination of the evangelists that it appears in three gospels. (*Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:4-15*).

The rich soil is a heart full of love of God, for his Creation, and for our brothers and sisters. Without love we are like the barren land that couldn't sustain growth. As Pope Francis points out: *“St Therese of Lisieux invites us to practice the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship”*. We can speak volumes by not responding to insults. Conversely, failing to speak out against evil can make us visibly complicit. The Pope has spoken out repeatedly against greed and injustice, telling us also what we must do to return to holiness. Most importantly, he has given us the language to use. It is not the language of despair, but of joy and love – the language of Jesus. Even when he is dealing with the most serious issues, he speaks with love. In the Lord's Prayer we ask *‘Thy kingdom come’*. That kingdom is for the whole world, across all generations. It is God's work of salvation. We help it to come about when we radiate truth, love, hope, joy, peace and justice. We hinder it when we show deceit, hate, despair and division. The language we use gives us our identity. Many sincere young people now talk of a crisis of identity. They are repelled by celebrity culture, confused by fake news, feel let down by politicians, betrayed by the cynicism of the corporate world and indifferent to a Church which is so often undermined by the media. It is up to us to use the language of love which illuminates the path to faith.

It wasn't just the miracles that attracted people to Jesus: it was his message of hope and salvation; his pursuit of truth and justice; his visible and practical support for the poor and oppressed. Similarly, the Church today shines out when it is visibly on the side of the oppressed and disadvantaged. It is then an open door where people seeking truth can take the first steps to an encounter with Jesus. Pope Francis tells us we must *“hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”*. One of the most powerful demonstrations of our faith comes through combining prayer with practical action. Some people might argue that social justice and care for creation have nothing to do with evangelisation. On the contrary, by showing the authenticity of our love, they have everything to do with it.

Starting with this Lent, may we preach the Gospel at all times, and when we have to use words, let us pray that we will speak wisely. *Sr. Margaret Atkins*

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Faith in Action Awards Celebration

Just before Christmas we gathered at St Wilfrid's church, Preston, for the second celebration of the Faith in Action Awards in our diocese. Twelve young people, all participants in the Young Leaders' programme run by Metanoia Project, were awarded Silver or Gold awards in recognition of the work they have done to live out their faith.

Faith in Action Awards is a national scheme run by CYMFed. It was created to recognise the great work that many of our young people do and to support them to reflect on their actions in the context of Faith. Awards are offered at Pin, Bronze, Silver and Gold levels, taking young people from the end of primary school through their high school years.

Sometimes likened to the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, young people

commit to serving others in their schools and parishes and the wider community.

The distinctive feature of the Faith in Action Award is the importance of taking time to reflect on why we do these things, with regular reflection points drawing on scripture, Church teaching and the lives of saints.

As they progress through the levels of the award, young people are expected to take on more responsibility. For the bronze award their service is likely to be alongside others, for silver they are asked to take on a leadership role and for the gold level to develop something new.

This year's recipients have been serving on the altar in their parishes, helping to run youth groups, supporting homeless drop-in facilities and providing new opportunities for their peers to engage

with the chaplaincy at college.

We are gradually rolling out these awards in the diocese and hope to offer them in a number of our high schools this year, and we are already planning for a bigger celebration of our young people later in the year.

It is clear to see what a difference the scheme has made to this year's recipients from comment in their final pieces:

"I learnt that I need to put more trust into God ... that God always makes a way for things to happen."

"This has encouraged me to be more open and to try and help people to understand my faith and the reasons why I believe in God."

"through this experience I was able to listen to what Jesus wants to say to me,

though not the easiest to understand or the clearest way, it allowed me to understand what truly gives me joy."

"My idea of mission has massively changed, from it being something that would be good to happen into something I want to be part of."

"I have found that my daily life revolves more around God and that I am more active with my faith than before."

"I always wanting to learn more about my faith and through this award I believe that my beliefs have been deepened as I have opened up my heart to Jesus."

For more information about Faith in Action Awards, visit faithinactionaward.co.uk or contact the Youth Service: team@castleriggmanor.co.uk

Dates for the Diary >>



20th-22nd March – Young Adults' Retreat

An opportunity to get together with others of a similar age and spend time in prayer and reflection. This year we will be thinking particularly about the place of Scripture in our lives and how God speaks to us. Open to young adults aged 18+.

9th-12th April – Easter Retreat

Take time to celebrate the Easter Triduum with other young people, journeying from the Last Supper to the Cross and on to the Empty Tomb, with times for fun, for prayer and for reflection. Open to young people in year 9 and above.

22nd-24th May – Family Weekend

Bring the family to Castlerigg and spend time with God together. The programme includes family activities, games and workshops, prayer and reflection, and time for the adults to be together. Open to all (*children must be accompanied by a responsible adult*).

13 June – Sponsored Walk

A repeat of our successful sponsored walk with Bishop Paul two years ago, but with a new route. There are a limited number of places to join us on the walk, with the target of raising £1,000 sponsorship per person. Please get in touch for more info.

23rd July - 1st August 2020 – Lourdes Pilgrimage

Bookings are open for next summer's Lourdes pilgrimage. Joining us on pilgrimage to Lourdes, you will meet new people and make friendships that will last a lifetime; serve others and receive so much more than you can give; find peace and joy in a place where heaven and earth meet; and have an amazing time. Open to current year 10 and above, £595.

For more information about all of the above, and for bookings, please see the What's On section of our website:

www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/events-whats-on



Past Teams' Retreat

Our annual gathering for past team is well established in the calendar and a couple of weeks before Christmas we welcomed back almost thirty former staff and volunteers for the opportunity to spend time together, renew old friendships and gather in prayer.

Several had made long journeys to join us, including volunteers from Hungary and Germany and every corner of Britain, and there were representatives of

teams ranging from last year to the mid-1990s.

We are conscious that we have lost touch with many former staff and volunteers – if you would like to update your details on our file (*and get your invite for next year*), please get in touch. We are now taking applications for next year's team – if you (*or someone you know*) would like to volunteer to spend a year at Castlerigg please get in touch: team@castleriggmanor.co.uk

Support our Work

Please help us to continue the work of the Youth Service. If you feel you might be able to help in any way please get in touch. If you are able to make a donation this would be greatly appreciated: www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/donate And most importantly, please keep us in your prayers.



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Carmelite Novices Formation Meeting

'Who do you say I am?'

The Novices and Novice Mistresses from Dolgellau Carmel in Wales, from Quidenham, Notting Hill, Lithuania and Iceland met for our annual Initial Formation Meeting. It is a good opportunity to connect with one another, build friendships and receive quality input. Here are some highlights from each of the main talks.

Jesus through the eyes of our Carmelite Saints

Fr Matt Blake OCD helped us to look at Jesus through the eyes of St John and St Teresa. He gave us her main description of prayer as a 'friendly conversation with the one who we know loves us'. Jesus wishes to repeat the Incarnation in each one of us. He gives Himself totally to the one who gives herself totally, holding nothing back.

St John tells us to fix our eyes on Him; to have a habitual desire to imitate Christ and to bring our life into conformity with His. He is the motivation of every choice we make. It's all for Jesus. How narrow is the way that leads to life. Following Christ, we were reminded, means denying self: 'The Cross is the supporting staff that eases the load'. Fr Matt painted a picture of asceticism not as a negative thing, but as a way of changing the inclination: it's whatever you need to do to set yourself free. What that is going to look like in practice is going to be different for each one of us, depending on what it is that binds us. If you hold on to even just one thing, you're not free. Love is the spur and also knowing that only Jesus answers the soul's deepest longings. The soul 'has left herself and all things for Him.' (Spiritual Canticle 11, 1). St John reassures us 'If the soul is seeking God, so much more is God seeking the soul'.

Jesus through the eyes of the four evangelists Fr Nick King SJ explored the question 'Who do you say I am?' through the eyes of the four evangelists. His talk will appear in a subsequent issue of The Catholic Voice.

St Teresa of Avila: Encountering Christ in Prayer

Sr Jo from Ware Carmel gave us a great synthesis of Teresa's teaching on prayer: 'we should occupy ourselves in looking at Christ who is looking at us'. Jo recalled St Teresa's emphasis on the need for proper preparation, approaching God through the humanity of Christ, an awareness of Who it is we are speaking to, and intentionality: we should go to prayer fully intending to make contact with God.

Prayer for Teresa is "simply a friendly and frequent, solitary conversation with Him who, as we know, loves us". The closest Teresa comes to giving us a method of prayer is being present to Christ in a particular Gospel setting, looking at Him.

Come and See Weekends

For women who are interested in tentatively exploring vocation to any form of religious life, or to contemplative life in particular, a series of 3 workshops are being hosted at Dolgellau Carmelite Monastery in Wales. There will be input from a speaker, and the chance to meet Carmelite sisters and share in the sisters' cycle of prayer, while staying in our flat/bungalow. You can attend just one, or the whole series.

Book through our website www.carmel-dolgellau.uk (under construction) or by phone. More info about enclosed contemplative life is available on our youtube page 'Carmel Wales'. *Sr Katherine Mary*

Dates:

'Jesus walked with them' (Lk 24.31)
– 27-29 March 2020

– with Sr Silvana Dallenegra FSCJ

'Their eyes were opened' (Lk 24.15)

– 17-19 July 2020

– with Sr Lynne Baron FCJ

'They set out at once' (Lk 24.33)

– 9-11 October 2020

– with Carmelite Sisters

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Tea and Chat celebrates 20 years

1999 saw the first gathering of Tea and Chat at St Joseph's Ansdell. The group has had many volunteers over the years providing transport, tea, chat and support to those in the local community who are suffering from loneliness, especially in the elderly or widowed people but not necessarily so.

In addition to fostering this social connection regular forms of entertainment and short talks on the 'good old days' have been arranged to ensure every gathering provides a different experience. At one event one of the volunteers, now deceased, gave a rendition of his musical prowess on the spoons, a skill he learnt during the WW11 whilst based at Scapa Flow.

The silent army of loyal volunteers has served copious cups of tea, baked and served every form


of confectionary you could imagine every fortnight for the last 20 years and continue to do so. And in November celebrating the work of the last 20 years the pupils of St Bede's High School, Lytham were on hand to 'wait on' the volunteers.

Around 40 volunteers past and present celebrated with Canon Aidan Turner, whose idea it was to set up the group when he was parish priest, Fr Harry Holden another past parish priest who was extremely supportive and current parish priest Fr David Burns.

There was plenty to reminisce about, photograph albums to flick through and remember all those with any association to Tea and Chat. Long may the brews and cake continue but most of all long may this outreach activity continue – here's to next 20 years!



We would like to thank these schools for always supporting the paper. If your school would like to do the same please contact Charlotte on 07932 248225 or 01440 730399 or email charlotter@cathcom.org to book your advert




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‘Unbound’

Finding Freedom in Christ

“There’s freedom to be found in Christ!”

We’ve all heard this time after time from pulpits across the world. But do we truly believe it? I certainly didn’t!

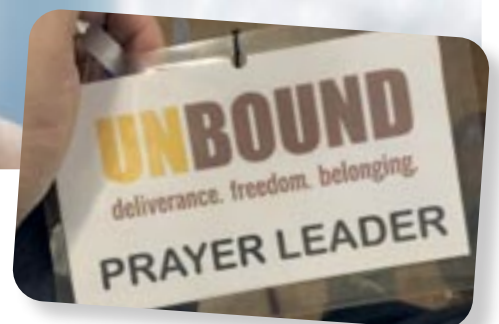
As a cradle Catholic, saying my rote daily prayers, going to church and *‘doing’* my regular embarrassed confession summed up the life of my faith; stagnant, suffocated and lifeless. It was my life, that came alive in the troubled times when I really needed it to, but for the most part a heartless lip-service and a life insurance policy for the after-life.

But something rumbled deeper. Living next door to the church I found myself attending the odd weekday Mass. I enjoyed the peace and stillness of the moment. I was emotionally numb, the priest would preach but I didn’t have the ears to listen to the message...

But still I came for the peace and stillness more and more until daily Mass became a regular habit. The papers and kindling for the fire were being laid. The air was stirring...

Then changes in our little church took a new direction. Two young and challenging priests were appointed to us, gifted preachers. For the very first time in forty years of listening, I heard the Gospel’s message of love. I was love, and was capable of being loved, unconditionally. As you can imagine the fire ignited, and the thirst for more became un-quenching.

Fast forward a few years, and the ups and downs of life and church life has fuelled and doused down those flames, but even in the spiritual desert there are embers; and hope of what is possible.



And recently, after a *‘usual’ ‘routine’* confession, our priest gave me a book to read called *‘Unbound’* - by M Lozano. At first I thought cheers mate! - This is one hell of a penance! And I vowed under my breath to find a new confessor quick! But I began to read...

As I did I understood my faith and its purpose for the very first time. I found that the complexities of life and ups and downs with people doesn’t happen to just me, but to all of us. So many times people tell us *‘it’s all in God’s plan’* and we want to strangle them because we’re frustrated, angry and lost. But *‘Unbound’* gave me a map to freedom in Christ, a sense of purpose, a drive and a reason to breathe.

For me *‘Unbound’* was the much needed spiritual psychotherapy I was seeking. It helped me to understand how we each internally interpret our life experiences and how they define you. From that very early age, the brain listened and set up thinking patterns, often unhelpful and filled with lies you’ve told yourself along the way that bind you from blossoming and believing in your self-worth and identity.

Reading *‘Unbound’* and then experiencing the ministry gave me the language to surrender myself, my experiences and life to God, and take up the role He intended, as His child.

Through this ministry I met God the Father. I learned that I am worthy! I am loved! I don’t need to *‘do’* anything to win the love of the Father! I am the apple of His eye. He delights in me! Yes me!!! I’m His creation. I’m uniquely me, made in His image and likeness. He loves me!

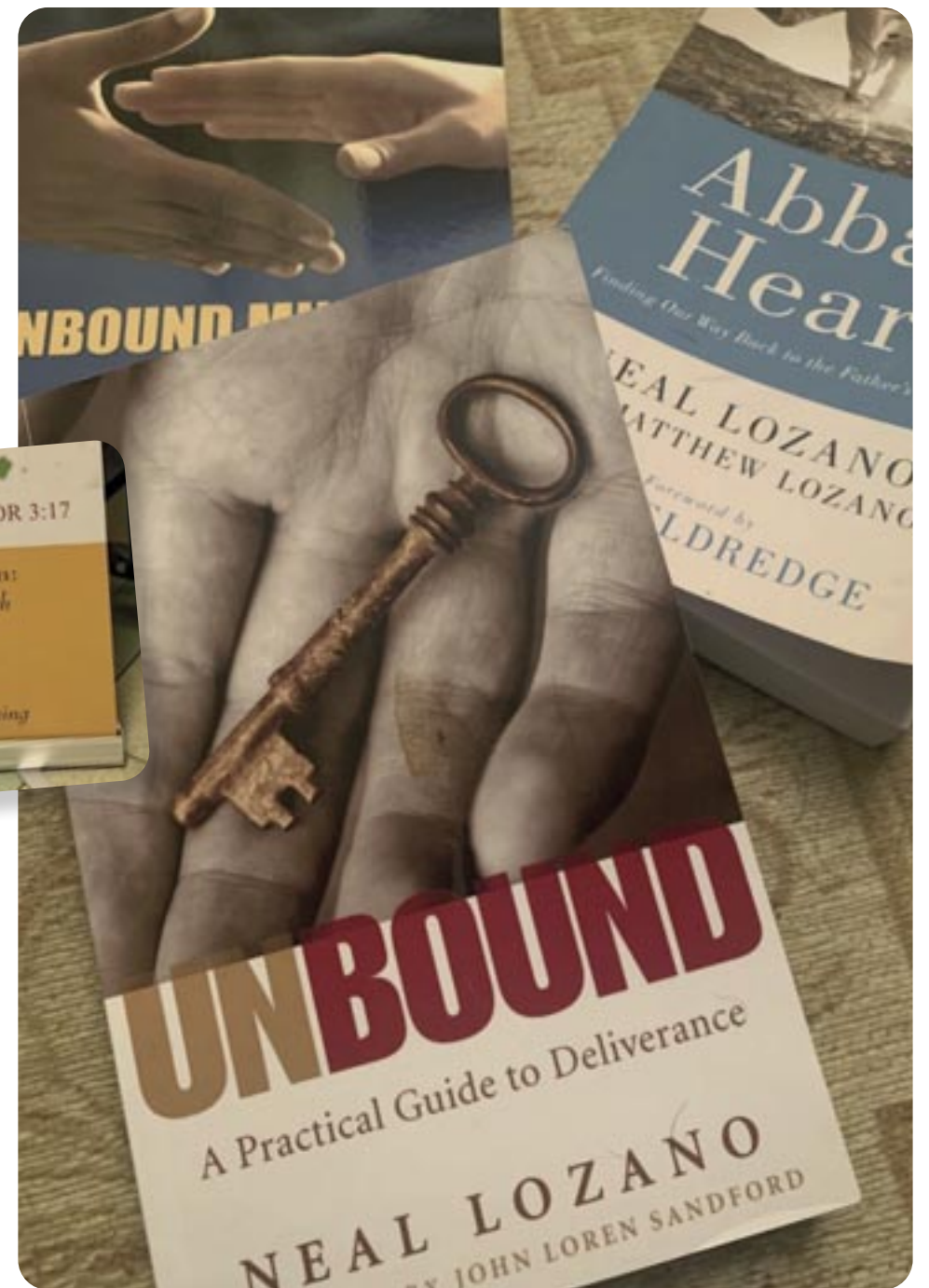
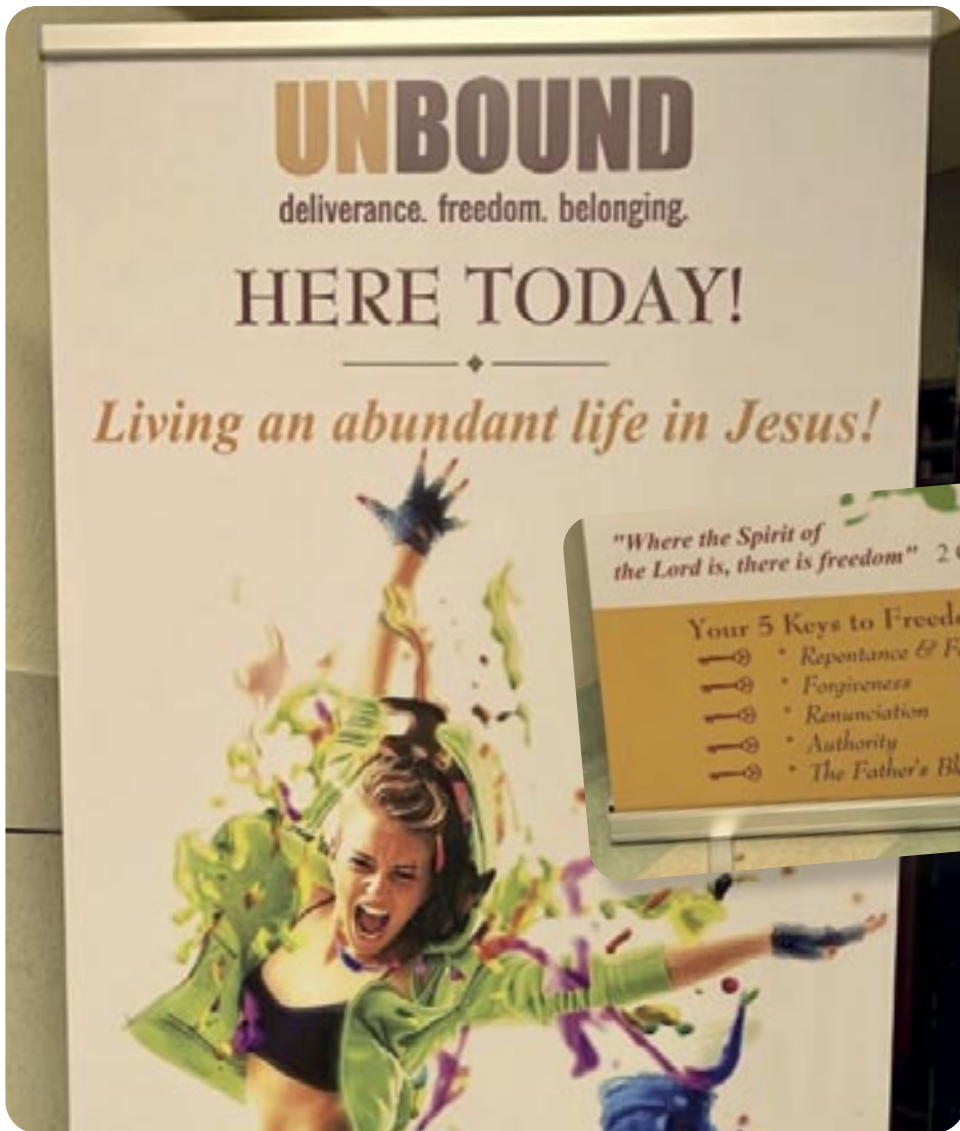
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So what is 'Unbound'?
And how does it work?

'Unbound' presents a simple model of FIVE KEYS of deliverance to find your freedom in Christ. These keys being:

- Repentance & Faith
- Forgiveness
- Enemies/Lies to renounce
- Command
- Father's Blessing

Imagine there is a door with five locks, and on the other side is Christ, and our freedom. We can use one or two keys, but that won't open the door. We need to use all five to experience real freedom in Christ. The seal is the Father's Blessing, and in my opinion the most beautiful part of it all.

There are a couple of ways to unlock the door. One, read the book and talk it through as directed (*in the book*) with a spiritual friend or priest. Another option is to attend a prayer ministry session where you will be able to share your unique story confidentially. A prayer leader and intercessor will guide you through this process.

A few months after reading the book I was fortunate enough to attend the national training and conference; lead by Matt Lozano, the writer's son. After receiving the ministry, I was given what felt like an impossible task, to intercede and eventually lead the prayer ministry. With trust and the will the Father, I discovered it was easy to share this new found freedom.

This deliverance ministry does not replace the Sacrament of Confession, but rather it enhances it. For instance; the mother that comes time and again to the confession asking for forgiveness for the way she is with her kids on a school day

morning. It doesn't matter how organised she is, or how she goes about things, the early morning rush to school is always manic, and it seems she has to 'lose it' in order to be heard and listened to. By the time they've all got to the school gates, she feels wretched, beaten and a failure. She is sorrowful, angry at herself and resents herself for having to resort to this behaviour over and over to get by. Despite her repentance and prayer, things never seem to change. 'Unbound' deliverance ministry would listen to this account, but look deeper. This mum is angry and resentful because under all this is a mum who is struggling with her identity. Underneath all this she believes she is a terrible mum, ill equipped, trying hard but doing an awful job of it all.

Looking a little deeper, we learn the lies of the enemy, whispers of worthlessness, isolation and anxiety of being a mother. We hear the fear of responsibility which paralyses, her role as a woman and a mother never really blessed; and the echoes of how her own mother cared for her. This ministry would unbind her from these lies; and show her the true identity of love in Christ and provide a new perspective, a new blessed identity and a sense of hope.

Deliverance isn't a 'dirty' word, any more than redemption! The Lord's Prayer is a prayer of deliverance and each time we ask Our Father to "deliver us from evil". This Unbound model is gentle, respectful and lets the Holy Spirit guide the process. We're all destined to find our true identity in Christ.

Curious? Look up 'Unbound' via www.heartofthefather.com, get the book by Neal Lozano. Open your heart and the rest will follow. 'Unbound' Deliverance Prayer Ministry will be available soon, near you in Blackpool and Cumbria.

Lisa Vallente-Osborne

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Christmas is a time of giving, and one local community sponsorship group, known as The Welcome Project - Fleetwood, has been working tirelessly to give the greatest gift of all - a safe and welcoming home for a refugee Syrian family.

The group has been fundraising to help sponsor the relocation of the family to Lancashire. And after an extraordinary night of celebration at St Kentigern's Church in Blackpool last October, where multi-cultural residents of Fleetwood and its neighbouring towns joined together in a display of solidarity and support to raise £1,700, the group has now submitted an application to the Home Office to receive a refugee family in the near future.

"It was a great evening of music and entertainment followed by food from around the world," says The Welcome Project volunteer, Siobhan Tweedale. "We had people from a variety of churches across the coast attend, local businesses, and representatives from Amnesty International. Our local authorities, including Lancashire County Council, came to listen to the choirs from both Fleetwood and Blackpool."

As part of the celebration, a local youth group provided entertainment in the form of dance and music from around the world, all wearing traditional dress from each of the countries.

"This was such a special night not just for the money we raised, which is amazing, but more importantly because of the spirit of the evening, and what it meant to our communities and to our Syrian friends," says Siobhan. "This was the first time that they have come together as a group since arriving to the UK in July, to relax and enjoy themselves, which they really did. They certainly danced the night away at the Centre."

The amount raised at the event was later matched by HSBC according to volunteers of the community sponsorship group, which was originally formed in response to Pope Francis' plea, "May every parish, every religious community, every monastery every sanctuary of Europe take in one family."

The Welcome Project - Fleetwood is a group of Catholic volunteers from the Parish of St. Wulstan's and St. Edmund's.

Some members have been involved as volunteers initially

“
This was such a special night not just for the money we raised, which is amazing, but more importantly because of the spirit of the evening, and what it meant to our communities and to our Syrian friends.
”
Siobhan Tweedale



supporting the Resettled Syrian families who came to the town in 2017. In response to Pope Francis’ plea and evidencing the needs of the resettled families, almost 30 volunteers got together and are working to bring a vulnerable family, desperately in need of protection, into the UK.

The Welcome Project volunteers work in several groups as defined by the Home Office and lead sponsor, Caritas.

They have to provide a lot of evidence in support of their application, be given the approval of the local authority, provide furnished accommodation, and show evidence that they have sufficient funds available. The volunteers have been working hard together and have the full support of Canon Alf Hayes, parishioners and Bishop Paul Swarbrick.


The Welcome Project group is putting into place all the necessary elements to ensure the resettled family members are provided with the necessary emotional and practical support, to empower them to rebuild their lives and to become self-sufficient members of their new community.
Amy Jones - The Welcome Project Fleetwood Media Liaison Officer

“
May every parish, every religious community, every monastery every sanctuary of Europe take in one family.
”
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The foundation stone of the new school for the Catholic community of Carlisle was blessed by Bishop Swarbrick on a cold December morning amid a small gathering of students, staff, the Mayor of Carlisle and other representatives.

The ceremony opened with ‘Christ is made the sure foundation’ to the tune of Westminster Abbey; a musical reminder that Jesus is the foundation and the one who supports, underpins and upholds all that we do. The Headteacher, Mr John McAuley read from St Paul’s letter during these first few days of the Year of the Word, and we heard God speak to us of us each being a dwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Bishop then blessed and incensed the stone which honours our patron St John Henry Newman, and this rite focused our prayer and petition in asking God to bless and protect the work of education on this site for many years to come.

It is poignant that this day marks the transferred feast of St Ralph Sherwin, who was trained for the priesthood at the

English College in Rome, and for whom preaching and teaching on English soil meant life and death. Fr Ronald Knox’s hymns focuses our hearts and minds:

*O English hearts, what heart can know
how spent with labours long ago
was England’s Church that bore you?
The Paths you tread in lane or street,
long since were trodden by the feet
of saints that went before you;
When priests, like sudden angels, came
to light in distant shires the flame
that faith’s dull embers cherished,
when Mass and shrift were sought for still
in silent farm, on lonely hill,
ere ancient memories perished.*

May the school of St John Henry Newman be a new flourishing of Catholic life in the north of our Diocese and powerfully help to build the Body of Christ through hearts and minds open to the Holy Spirit. This Advent, may Mary the Mother of Jesus nurture and nourish the life of Jesus in each of us as we continue to build and grow as the visible sign of Jesus among us.

*Mr C Sumner MA (Oxon) PGCE
Head of RE – Newman School, Carlisle*

Our Lady of Lujan goes Home



On 30 October last year, I was invited to join the Bishop of HM Forces, Paul Mason, and the three Services Principal RC Chaplains, one of whom, Rev Deacon David Skillen, is from our Diocese, in Rome, for a reconciliation service with Argentinian Veterans, accompanied by their Military Bishop.

The highlight of the visit was the handing back to the Argentinians a statue of the image of Our Lady of Lujan, Argentina's National Marian shrine. They, in their turn, presented us with a replica to take back to England. Both images were blessed by Pope Francis, and, as you can see by the photograph, I was blessed to have an opportunity to chat for a minute or two with him.

The statue, which had been brought to the Falkland Islands by the invading Army, had been in our Forces Catholic Cathedral in Aldershot for the last 37 years. I had brought it back at the end of the War in 1982, when I was then an Army Chaplain. Mgr Daniel Spraggon, resident Parish Priest, had offered it to me, and after a discussion, with three Argentinian Officers, monitored by the Swiss Red Cross, it was agreed I would take it back to England in memory of all who had died, on both sides. They agreed to take back to Argentina an identical statue which had been gifted to St Mary's Stanley by Argentinian tourists some years before.

It was only this year, when some Argentinian tourists noticed the statue in Aldershot, that overtures for its possible return to Argentina began to be made. Things moved swiftly, with the International Catholic Military Bishops gathering in Rome deemed to be the perfect occasion to make the exchange. It was a symbolic and historic day, with much rejoicing and firm offers of lasting friendship between fellow Catholics, who for a brief period nearly 40 years ago, due to the vagaries of war, had been enemies.

Canon Alf Hayes, Fleetwood



Fr James Langan SJ RIP



Fr James Langan SJ was a great man and an outstanding priest. He died in the early morning of the 13 December 2019 in the community house at St Wilfrid's. Fr Paul Fletcher and 2 district nurses were with him. He was 93.

Born in Rotherham Fr Jim joined the Jesuits in 1949 and was ordained on the 31 July 1959 – St Ignatius's feast day. Fr Jim studied philosophy and theology and was a respected teacher.

I first met Fr Jim 50 years ago at Sacred Heart church, Wimbledon. I was a student and enjoyed going to Mass when Fr Jim was the celebrant. He was popular and would like to talk to the parishioners after Sunday Mass. He had a great relationship with young people.

In the 90's I was pleased to meet Fr Jim again at St Wilfrid's, when along with my wife Emma and our young children we would attend the Sunday 4.30pm Mass. Again, after Mass Fr Jim would stand at the church entrance speaking to the congregation. It seemed that he engaged particularly with those visiting the church making a point to make them feel welcome. Lancashire Polytechnic was growing in reputation and numbers and Fr Jim was determined to make the students welcome.

When the opportunity arose I reminded Fr Jim where we had met previously. He gave me no indication as to whether or not he remembered me. I asked him about a number of people I remembered from Sacred Heart and he was able to give me a good update including about a mutual friend, a University Professor who, sadly, had died from a brain tumour.

From then on I would speak to Fr Jim quite regularly. We would often meet in town. Our conversations weren't only about religion. Fr Jim was clearly interested in Preston and its people and we talked about politics. I looked forward to our discussions and I would cross the road to speak to him. Sometimes after our meetings I would think this man's a Tory and then after our next meeting, no he's left wing. I never asked him which party he supported and he never told me.

Fr Jim had a mischievous sense of humour. I remember asking him why St Wilfrid's have a parish priest and a rector. He smiled and said he hadn't a clue and then proceeded to give me a detail explanation of their very different and exacting roles.

Fr Jim was a true Christian, whose actions matched his words and this made him a great Evangeliser.

I'm better off for knowing Fr Jim and I suspect many others are as well.

RIP Fr James Langan SJ, eternal rest grant unto him O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him, may he rest in peace Amen.

Frank McGrath, Preston

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Fridays: 6:30 pm

Shrine Church of St Walburga, Preston
Mondays – Fridays: 8:30 am, Low Mass
Saturdays: 10:30 am Low Mass
Sundays: 10:30 am, Sung Mass

Shrine of the English Martyrs, Preston
Mondays – Saturdays: 12 noon, Low Mass
Sundays: 9:00 am, Low Mass

Our Lady & St Michael, Banklands, Workington
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A double celebration



Sarah and Andrew Wade.

Fr Peter Burns had a first recently, when he celebrated the convalidation of Sarah and Andrew Wade's marriage at the Sacred Heart Church in Thornton, near Blackpool. Sarah, a Catholic from birth married Andy three years ago in a non-Catholic ceremony in Banbury.

It was a dream come true for Sarah after having moved to Thornton and for Andy to want to have their wedding recognised by the Church. Sarah couldn't wait then for Andy to start the RCIA programme and make their marriage a sacrament.

Fr Peter said "We do not get too many requests for convalidation and I think people are a little unsure of the process. I am delighted for Sarah and Andy and

it was a privilege to share their special evening".

Andy recently completed the RCIA program and after receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist was welcomed into the Church and afterwards said "I felt as if I've travelled through an open door and come home".

I'm delighted that we can both share and celebrate at church together".

Whilst Sarah and I are both blind, we feel so welcome at the Sacred Heart. Sarah is a professional singer and we both enjoy singing and use the Braille Celebration Hymnal that Fr Peter kindly purchased for us".



Fr Peter Burns, Deacon Tony Edwards, Sarah and Andrew Wade, after the Mass of Convalidation with witnesses Michelle Hinds and Kevin Lonergan.

New Icon Commemorates Lancaster Martyrs



Photo courtesy of Michael Durnan.

St Joseph's Church, Lancaster, is now home to a new shrine to Lancaster's 14 Catholic martyrs.

The shrine, the only one of its kind to commemorate the martyrs in Lancaster, features a specially designed icon unveiled by Bishop Paul Swarbrick.

From 1584-1646, a number of Catholics were executed in Lancaster for their faith. They were tried at Lancaster Castle and hanged, drawn and quartered at a site near Williamson Park, commemorated by the Martyrs Monument at Highfield.

Two martyrs – Edmund Arrowsmith and Ambrose Barlow – were declared saints in 1970 and all the others have been beatified, usually the first stage to sainthood.

Their story is featured in a new booklet written by Fr Philip Conner who hopes to create a Martyrs walk from the shrine to Lancaster's Priory and Castle and on to the Martyrs Monument, finishing at St Peter's Cathedral.

The martyrs are Fr James Bell from Warrington; John Finch from Ecclestone; Fr Robert Nutter from Pendle; Fr Edward Thwing, Fr Robert Middleton and Fr Thurstan Hunt, all from Yorkshire; Fr John Thules from Upholland; Roger Wrenno, a Chorley weaver; Fr Edmund Arrowsmith from Haydock; Richard Hayhurst from Broughton; Fr Ambrose Barlow from Withington; Fr Edward Bamber from

the Fylde; Fr John Woodcock from near Leyland and Fr Thomas Whitaker, from Burnley.

Fr Thules's quarters were hung up in Lancaster, Preston, Wigan and Warrington. At Mr Wrenno's execution, the rope snapped and he was asked to recant his faith but refused and climbed the ladder to the gallows again.

Relics of Edmund Arrowsmith, including his hand, are enshrined in an Ashton-in-Makerfield church where some miraculous cures are said to have happened and the relic of Ambrose Barlow's skull remains at Wardley Hall, the Episcopal residence of the Bishop of Salford.

All the Martyrs and the Holy Family are represented in the new icon by Martin Earle of Shrewsbury, inspired by medieval altarpieces.

These often showed the saints set upon a floral carpet and for this triptych, the carpet pattern beneath the holy family shows Lancashire roses and curlews which are familiar in the county.

The floral carpet beneath the Martyrs feet is taken from a wallpaper pattern at the Pugin house in Ramsgate. Peter Paul Pugin was the architect of St Joseph's Church which is currently undergoing major restoration supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Louise Bryning

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Quizmasters – 16th Annual Blackpool Deanery Quiz
Fr Jim Burns, Dean, presented the trophy to the winning team of Christ the King and St Kentigern.

Casting a Ray of Hope

by Julia Beacroft

I think it is safe to say that February is probably the most depressing month of the year. The Christmas and New Year celebrations are well and truly over, money is often a bit tight in the aftermath of these and the weather is usually awful! There can seem little to look forward to...

Yet this is not necessarily the case. Apart from the romantic celebration of St Valentine on 14 February, which adds some much needed light relief, the Church has a couple of special days of her own in this month. At the beginning, on 2 February we observe the Presentation of the Lord and February usually also marks the beginning of Lent – an important six weeks in the Church's calendar which ultimately leads us to Easter. This year Ash Wednesday – the first day of Lent – falls on 26 February. So all in all, in a month which can appear unbearably dull and dark, there is actually more going on than would first appear to be the case.

Daddy

Personally, I always think of my late father in this month. This is because he had a February birthday and his star sign was Pisces – the fishes. And in fact remembering my father at this time also calls to mind the presence of the Lord in my life. For Jesus himself taught us that God is the father of us all and that when we pray, we should address him as such. The Aramaic word Jesus used for the father was 'Abba' implying closeness and intimacy – not just 'Father' but 'Daddy'. And so I know that the personal relationship I had experienced with my earthly father, I can also experience with my heavenly Father, who knows everything there is to know about me and yet loves me anyway.

Cherished

To be honest, I'm not really convinced of the authenticity of star signs but I do know that fishes and fishing not only remind me of my father's star sign but also of Jesus' disciples, many of whom were simple fishermen who left everything they had ever known to follow the Master. This I have no problem in believing. Furthermore, we in our turn are called to be 'fishers of men'; to cast our nets wide and spread the Gospel message by our words, actions and lifestyles.

And so may you rejoice this February in the knowledge that you are truly loved by your heavenly Father, for it does not matter whether the weather is inclement, we are short of money or suffering from a sense of anti-climax. We are loved, we are cherished and we are called to cast out 'nets' far and wide – to spread the Good News. We live in hope in the Lord.

Julia Beacroft is an author, editor, workshop leader and presenter in Catholic faith formation. Her book 'Sanctifying the Spirit' is available to buy from AMAZON, Waterstones or Book Depository. Please visit www.sanciobooks.com for more information. Follow Julia on Facebook & Twitter. Copyright ©2019 Julia Beacroft. All rights reserved.

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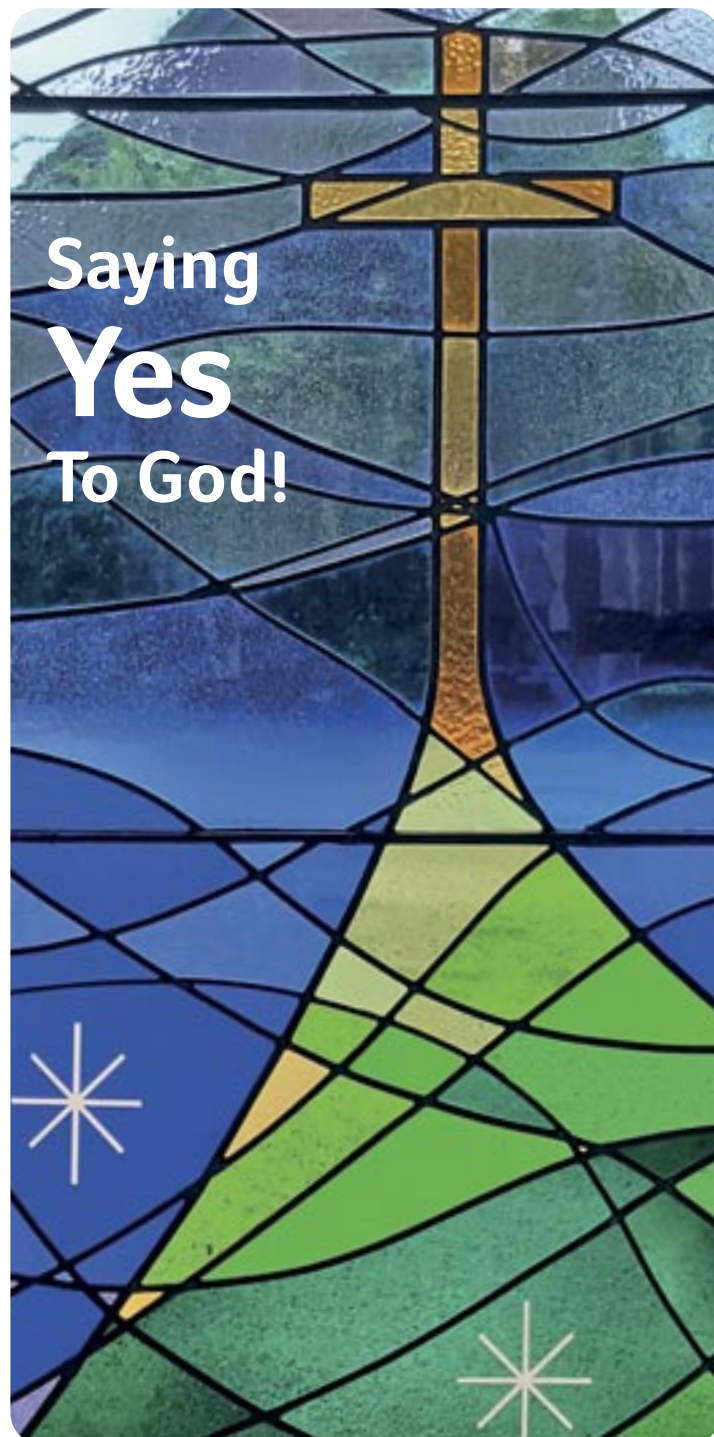
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This was the title for the Advent retreat day organised by Women Together in the Diocese of Lancaster that took place in the Xaverian Spirituality Centre in Preston on Saturday, November 23rd. We were warmly welcomed there by Father Bideri and by Sue Gornall, chair of the organising committee.

After a simple relaxation exercise to help us lay aside our worries and concerns, the opening session focused on helping us to explore who God is for us, our images of God and where they have come from, so that we can discover God who has first said YES to us and to all God's beloved creation. Everyone was given time for personal reflection in silence to ponder this wonder. The Centre has prayer areas that enable people to find their own personal space for this important "work". Father Bideri presided at Mass at midday and spoke movingly of a wholehearted YES to God in his life experience as he encouraged us in our own heart searchings. After lunch we gathered again, this time to explore saying "YES" through the experience of Mary. We gazed slowly and with careful focus on Fra Angelico's fresco of the Annunciation as we pondered the power of Luke's story and the sheer courage of Mary's life and world-changing "YES". Again we had time for personal prayer and reflection, before coming together to ponder, in religious art and the gospel of the Visitation, how God's love always reaches out and sends us to share love with others. Our day ended with a period of Exposition and silent prayer to enable us to savour what we had received from this day that would stay with us as we returned to our everyday lives, cares, responsibilities and relationships. *Philomena Grimley SHCJ*



IMPACT visit Sherwood Care Home



On Sunday 8th December, 2019, pupils from Our Lady's Catholic High School and the Preston Impact Youth Group paid a visit to see the residents at Sherwood Court Care Home in Fulwood.

Since we were on the countdown to Christmas, we began by singing some Christmas songs to the residents and they joined in if they wanted to. There was a bit of Mariah Carey, some Wham! As well as a few classic carols such as 'Away in a Manger'.

After the Christmas festivities, we sang some Abba, Queen, The Greatest Showman and even 'Let It Go' from Frozen! The residents of the care home enjoyed a sing-along, with some hot drinks and a mince pie and we all enjoyed meeting, and talking to, those who were of a different generation to us.

We hope to continue our inter-generational work further in the future and get to know people who we wouldn't usually spend our time with. On behalf of the Impact Youth Group, we would like to say thank you to all of the staff and residents at Sherwood Court Care Home for their lovely, warm, welcome and for allowing us to sing for them!

Hallie Brady

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