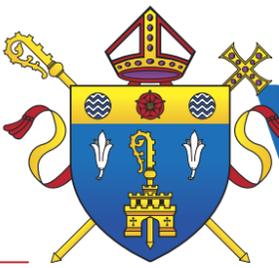


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The Catholic  **VOICE** *of Lancaster*

The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster

INSIDE: p03 Christians & Coronavirus
p04 Goodbye Fr John

Issue 321 + July '20



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” Nelson Mandela

“

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.

John 34 ”

“

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

” Martin Luther King

“

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 21:5 ”



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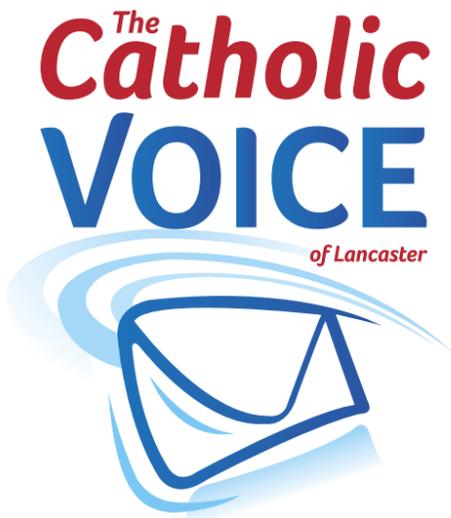
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EDITORIAL

June 2020 will long live in our memories. It is the month when many of our church doors finally opened for private prayer, after many weeks of lockdown and it is the month when the violent death of George Floyd (a black man killed by a white police officer in the USA) prompted a global wave of disbelief and anger that has led to civil unrest and protests in many towns and cities.

We have, for many weeks now, been physically forced apart from friends, family and our parish communities and we have been deprived of the sacramental forgiveness of our sins and food of life in the Eucharist. But on-line engagement in the Mass and other devotions has been strong and there have been lots of examples of us coming together as a Church to serve our local communities and beyond.

The gradual relaxation of the lockdown rules will allow, to some extent, people to re-engage face to face, provided social distancing rules are observed. And the relaxation will allow us to come before the Blessed Sacrament in private prayer.

As a country and a global community we are still a long way off a coronavirus free world so we will have to live with a new normal as we try to get back on our feet. What is this new normal?

During the lockdown we witnessed many acts of community minded kindness and generosity, we noticed lower air pollution levels, our coastal waters cleaner and our wildlife thriving. Do we intend to throw all this away as the drive to get back to the old 'normal' slowly accelerates. As Christians we have a duty to act as dutiful stewards of the beautiful world God created for us, are we ready to respond?

God created mankind too, each one loved, each one equal in His eyes. And yet we are constantly witnessing racism and intolerance in many guises. There is a growing lack of dignity given to human life at all of its stages, starvation and violence both physical and emotional and a turning away from God towards a more and more secular society.

"Love one another as I have loved you" Jesus taught. Do we? Are we prepared as a Church to take this message out to change the hearts and minds who do not value the gift of life at all its stages or seek to harm and exploit others for their own gratification? Are we willing to change ourselves?

The *Catholic Voice* believes that we need to respond to these challenges. Prayer and a fervent desire to live a Sacramental way of life is a good start. If God is not at the centre of our lives and love of one another shaping our words and actions we will fall short.

We also need to be practical and put our faith into action, opposing all forms of intolerance and abuse to create a cleaner, fairer and more caring society. We need to look at what we are prioritising in our parishes: do we allow ourselves to get bogged down by thinking inwardly or do we have our sights on the horizon, as witnesses to the gospel and caring about the pressures on our global climate and the inequalities and suffering of our fellow beings?

The *Catholic Voice* believes the hiatus in our daily lives that we have witnessed in recent weeks has provided us with the time to ponder these issues and maybe reset our focus so that we emerge with a new vibrancy and endeavour to live the lives God wants us to.

“

So never lose an opportunity of urging a practical beginning, however small, for it is wonderful how often in such matters the mustard-seed germinates and roots itself.

”

Florence Nightingale

“

Only those who live by faith really know what is happening in the world; the great masses without faith are unconscious of the destructive process going on, because they have lost vision of the heights from which they have fallen.

”

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen





“We have come to see ourselves as (the world’s) lords and masters.”
Pope Francis, Laudato Si



The CAFOD coronavirus petition asks the Prime Minister to do the following:

- Make sure that any vaccine developed with UK public money is made available to everyone regardless of their income or where in the world they live.
- Provide urgent financial and technical support to help developing countries cope with this crisis.
- Cancel all debt payments by developing countries due in 2020 and 2021 so that countries can spend money on much needed healthcare rather than debt repayments.
- Put plans in place to rebuild a fairer, more just society after the crisis so that the world’s most vulnerable people can live in dignity and to restore our common home for future generations.

To sign it, go to e-activist.com/page/59334/petition/1

Christians and Coronavirus

The coronavirus pandemic didn't just creep up on us. All the warning signs were there - previous outbreaks of novel viruses originating in places where the abuse of the natural world is at its worst - places where vast numbers of animals, often hunted from the forests, come into close proximity to humans, providing the ideal conditions for them to jump species. In 2018 the World Health Organisation did a pandemic simulation which effectively predicted COVID-19 from its source to its spread, but world leaders took little notice and planning was woefully inadequate.

To understand the underlying reasons for this complacency, we can do no better than to look at Pope Francis' great encyclical letter, Laudato Si. He shows how we have come to see ourselves as the world's lords and masters. We have forgotten that the world was created by God and belongs to Him and that we are mere stewards. One of the underlying themes in Laudato Si is that everything is connected. Pope Francis sees clearly the connection between the abuse of nature and the origins of COVID-19 as described by the scientists researching its source.

There are many connections between COVID-19 and the climate emergency. For a start, it is the poor who suffer the worst effects, even though they have not caused the problem. It was the affluent who spread the virus around the world through global travel. Economically sound countries have well-developed health systems to help manage the pandemic, whilst poor countries, deep in debt, have only minimal resources to deal with it. Furthermore, climate change effects, such as tropical storms, add significantly to the difficulty in many poor countries. Even within countries there can be big differences between the risks to the rich and to the poor. Even in the UK, poor people are more than twice as likely to

die from COVID-19 as those who are more financially secure.

Climate change has been staring us in the face for decades and we are now faced with a climate emergency which is far more serious than the pandemic. There can be no vaccine against climate change - only a change of heart by the whole of humanity can help us.

So what can we do? We must acknowledge, in faith, that this is the wake-up call we so desperately need to show us how far we have strayed from our obligation to care for our common home. We need hope - not a casual optimism, but a deep-rooted trust in and reliance on the Lord with the determination to change; and we need love - a deep love in which we hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor - a love expressed through faith in action.

There are causes for optimism - there is a lot of love around, as witnessed by the magnificent response of all who care for the sick and elderly, and by the huge increase in community spirit. It is gratifying to see how many initiatives such as food banks have the Church at their heart. The challenge is to harness this good will to create a better world - a world where the gospel values of truth and justice prevail.

This challenge was summed up brilliantly by Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD when launching CAFOD's coronavirus petition 'Unite against Coronavirus' -

"We are living through one of the global events that will shape humanity, and our response can only be the response of the heart of God. We need to be His hands and feet - we cannot do otherwise."

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After five years with the Youth Service, Fr John is moving on at the end of the month. Here he reflects on his time as director and chaplain.

When Bishop Michael first asked me to move to Castlerigg as Director of the Youth Service, I naturally said yes, but the prospect was daunting. At the time I was chaplain to Blackpool Victoria Hospital, and I wasn't sure how well I would manage in a very different setting and with all the energy that is found in a place like Castlerigg. I needn't have worried; for the last five years I have been supported by a brilliant team of staff and volunteers, and as a team we must have worked with many more than fifteen thousand young people.

A year after I started I took a group from the diocese to World Youth Day in Krakow. Taking a coach of young people so far from home, to join with millions of others from around the world was particularly terrifying prospect. But it was a joyful and life giving experience. Witnessing the exuberance of the young people from every corner of the world and their love for the church was inspiring, and the impact of this on the young people whose faith wasn't so strong was a joy to see.

I would, though, have to say that working with our gap-year teams has been the most enriching aspect of my time at Castlerigg. The vast majority of young people who come to Castlerigg with a school retreat don't have a relationship with the church, and it is the witness of our gap-year team that encourages these young people to take the first steps to exploring the faith. Several of the gap-year volunteers started their own faith journeys on retreat at Castlerigg, and in turn they share their excitement of the journey they are making with the young people we work with. Talking with the volunteers about faith and sharing our lives together gives me hope for the future and reminds me that I always need to be open to continuing on this same journey.

Whilst I hope for a calmer aspect to life in my next appointment, I will certainly miss the vibrancy of life with the Youth Service. And I am so grateful to the young people I have worked with, and particularly to the staff and volunteers at Castlerigg.

Editors Note: The Catholic Voice thanks Fr John for his service to Castlerigg and his unstinting support of this Paper. We wish him well and hope that his new appointment brings him many blessings.



Castlerigg in Lockdown

You won't be surprised to read that the lockdown has had a significant impact on the Youth Service, as it has on almost every aspect of our lives. Our last group of young people came on retreat at Castlerigg Manor in early March, and since then the building has been eerily quiet.

Soon after the last school group left, our gap-year team also packed up to spend the lockdown at home with their families, and we decided that, with no visitors staying, we couldn't justify asking the staff to come in either.

After Easter, Fr John was left on his own at the Manor and began ticking things off a long list of jobs to keep the place going and to brighten up parts of the building.

More recently Jack, the new Director of the Youth Service, has also started work, beginning to learn how the Youth Service operates, reflect on his own vision for what we do, and joining in painting and decorating!

It has been a challenge to keep on top of the day-to-day tasks (*I'm amazed by how quickly the grass grows – and we have over five acres of grounds!*), but we have also been able to tidy up some parts of the building that were showing their age. And most importantly we are getting ready for when we welcome young people back to Castlerigg and when we get on the road and visit them.

The biggest challenge has been financial – normally, more than 80% of the Youth

Service's budget comes from visitors paying to stay here. For the time being we are having to do without this income, and we don't know how soon it will be possible for schools groups to come back in the autumn.

We are hopeful that it will be soon be possible to reopen our holiday cottage, The Lodge, a small step to getting back on our feet. And we are looking into the possibility, if we can do it safely, of opening the Manor for family groups etc. in the summer holidays.

If you'd be interested in coming to stay please look out for more info on our website (www.castleriggmanor.co.uk) and social media (@CastleriggManor) – we'll make an announcement as soon as we can.





An Early Conclusion

I think it's fair to say, on behalf of this year's Castlerigg team, finishing our gap year prematurely was one of the toughest things we've had to do. It was heart-breaking enough knowing we were leaving our work behind, but it was even more heart-breaking having to go our separate ways knowing that it could be months before we would see each other again. The bond we made as a team was more than just friendship, it was more like being a family and knowing that we would never all be living together or doing the job we love together was so upsetting. Having such a small amount of time to come to terms with this only made the farewell harder.

Over the past seven months at Castlerigg we have all grown so much as people. The people who walked into Castlerigg on 16th August 2019, were not the people that left. We have all developed in our faith, maturity, confidence and our love for working with young people. Volunteering at Castlerigg has been such a rewarding and eye-opening experience, and one that we will keep with us forever. The memories we have made with both the team and the young people, are memories that are not going to be easily forgotten. As a team, we have all learnt the importance of being active in our faith and know the significance of taking time out of our day to talk to God. We've also learnt how different each young person that walks through the doors of Castlerigg really is, each one of them unique. I think we can all agree that we certainly got as much out of a retreat with the young people as they did.

Something that we really noticed at Castlerigg is how different each day is and the joy that each day holds. Every retreat is different and every retreat brings a new light to Castlerigg, which keeps the

job so exciting. It's so important at challenging times like this that we acknowledge the importance of each day and make sure we fill it with laughter and love, because we never know what the future holds. Nobody would have predicted a pandemic happening in our year, but I think it has taught us all a valuable lesson: not to take any day of our lives or our loved ones for granted, to get up and live our lives to the full.

Although this is a difficult time, and a time full of uncertainty, it can also be a time for growth, to grow as a person and in faith. In this time we've learnt that it's important to thank God for each day he blesses us with and to remember that even through all of this, there is a reason for it because he loves us. Even at the best of times it can sometimes be difficult to thank God. Right now it can be even more challenging to thank God. Without being able to attend Mass we might feel distant from God but there are so many ways to keep our relationship with God as strong as ever. Watching Mass online isn't quite the same but it's still a way of being able to participate in Mass, listen to the readings and the Gospel and making the effort to listen to the Word of God is so important.

Another way of keeping our relationship with God strong is taking time out of your day to light a candle and say a rosary or a prayer and spend some time to sit in the quiet and talk to God. Even if it's just a prayer before bed, it's better than not talking to God at all.

We understand how difficult things are right now and how scary the future may seem, but as long as we trust God and trust his plan, we can get through this together. Stay safe and stay inside. *Annie, Castlerigg*



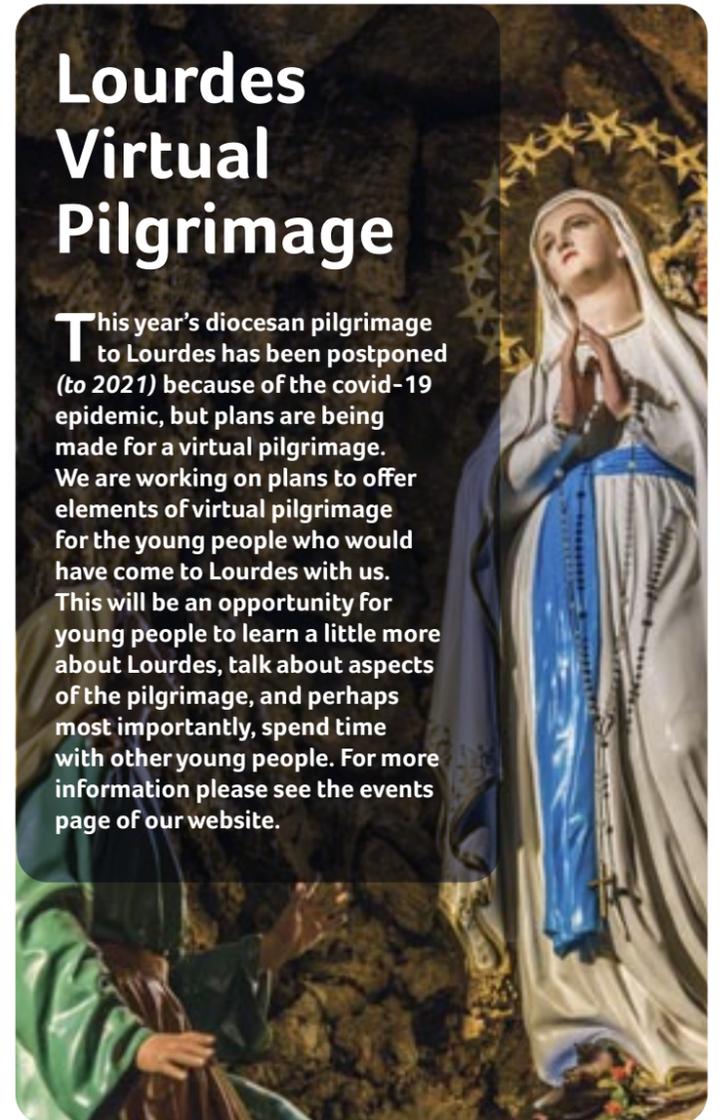
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Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage

This year's diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes has been postponed (to 2021) because of the covid-19 epidemic, but plans are being made for a virtual pilgrimage. We are working on plans to offer elements of virtual pilgrimage for the young people who would have come to Lourdes with us. This will be an opportunity for young people to learn a little more about Lourdes, talk about aspects of the pilgrimage, and perhaps most importantly, spend time with other young people. For more information please see the events page of our website.




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Taking it one at a time

A death from COVID-19 matters, but not because it is a death from COVID-19. It does not matter because it is a statistic. It matters because it is the death of a precious, irreplaceable human being.

I went to my first virtual funeral in March. It was deeply moving: the person whose loss we were mourning, Fr David Sanders OP, had been a close friend for many years, and a huge influence on the most formative part of my adult life. He had a great gift for friendship, and we were part of a circle of friends which he did much to keep alive. The simple funeral Mass was conducted with gentle solemnity by his Prior and brothers. There was a tangible sense of his family and friends, including his own Dominican brethren who could not be physically present, being together, united in a true spiritual communion.

The fact that he had died with the virus was unimportant. All that mattered was to remember and to pray for David, our friend, in all his concrete individuality. Fr Timothy Radcliffe's sermon, based on the story of the raising of Lazarus, took friendship as its focus. He quoted the great Dominican Fr Bede Jarrett who described fidelity in friendship as *'the most beautiful thing on earth'*. Jarrett wrote: *'Our lives are made and marred by our friendships. In the worlds of nature and grace love is more powerful than reason, heart than head, friendship than law.'*

Friendship matters, Fr Timothy went on, *'because it is a sharing in the life of God, the eternal friendship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Every friendship teaches us something about the life of God. That is why we need many friends, many windows into God's love.'* Fr David always loved meeting people, including the nurses and doctors during his chemotherapy sessions. *'He was much more interested in them than in his treatment. He was interested in their particularity, their individuality.'* Fr Timothy commented, *'This gives us a tiny glimpse of how God loves each of us. God does not love humanity in general. God knows the uniqueness of each of us in a way that we do not. When we glimpse that, we cannot but love them.'*

Fr David's death, for which he had been preparing during decades of prayerful religious life, was, when it came, not grim, but very tranquil. Yes, it was deeply sad

that he could not be surrounded by his brethren. But he knew he was carried by their prayers and by the prayers of so many others of us. When death was near, he rang Fr Timothy on his mobile to say goodbye. The next day he asked the nurses to let him die in peace. And so he did, slipping gently away.

Fr David had a deep love of Scripture, which he had shared with so many of us. He will have known well the stories of his namesake, the King of Israel. That other David had a weakness for statistics. What had annoyed King Saul most of all was his rival's supporters singing in triumph about the numbers he had killed in battle: *'Saul has killed his thousands and David his tens of thousands'*. David was tactless enough to go on to count out two hundred of the foreskins of his Philistine victims as a bride-price for Saul's daughter (*Saul had asked only for one hundred*). How ironic then, that David's lament for Saul's son, his dearest friend, is so moving and so personal: *'Jonathan, by your dying I too am stricken, I am desolate for you, Jonathan my brother. Very dear you were to me.'* Had he forgotten that each one of his ten thousands was also a son, a brother, a dearest friend? David learnt the lesson about statistics a very hard way, when he was punished later on for counting his troops instead of trusting in God, punished, ironically, with a plague.

In a strange way, Fr David's death has made the crisis much easier. It has helped me to put the virus in its place. A death from COVID-19 matters, but not because it is a death from COVID-19. It does not matter because it is a statistic. It matters because it is the death of a precious, irreplaceable human being. When we remember that, we can take each bereavement as it comes, one at a time, so as not to be overwhelmed.

In 2018, according to the Office for National Statistics, 541,589 deaths were registered in the UK. Would it matter if it had been 541,590? Statistically, not at all. Humanly speaking, it would have made an infinite difference, that specific extra person was the centre of a whole world. I remember another funeral, of a much younger friend, who died suddenly a decade ago, leaving a wife and small children. The huge church in Cambridge was packed with two thousand mourners,

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the Mass was moving and beautiful in every way, with a choir that could have been professional, a sanctuary full of clergy, powerful readings, enriched by other languages and even a Jewish prayer. Emile was honoured for everything that he was; scholar, teacher, family man, friend. I remember thinking then, 'This is a marvellous occasion, which does justice to a marvellous person. But actually, every single person would be worthy of this, of our honour, our love and our prayers.' But again, one at a time.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was our English poet with the greatest gift for expressing individuality. He called it the 'thisness' - of a bluebell or a kestrel, of a landscape or a river, above all of a human being.

One of his most poignant poems laments the death of Felix Randal, a blacksmith.

He evokes him in all his thisness, 'big-boned and hardy-handsome', forging a shining shoe for a vast dray horse. Hopkins describes how this powerful, energetic, impatient, man became gentle through his illness, and how a tenderness grew up between Felix and himself as he ministered to him. The poem uses Felix's name repeatedly to bring home to the reader this specific, personal, loss. Each specific person, one at a time.

This is a time of great sadness in part because we have been forced to face our mortality. Of course, we knew already that millions of people die every year and that each one of us would die one day. But we have somehow been able to live with the loss of all those elderly people, cancer patients or drowning migrants, without paying it detailed attention. Now the statistics are turning into human

beings. And each of us knows that there but for the grace of God go I. Facing such truths together, with honesty, can only be good. The other side of this is consolation. The sorrow that we feel for each is only the other side of joy and gratitude. We grieve because he or she was immeasurably precious. And for the same reason we are immeasurably blessed by each other, by those who have lived and by those still alive.

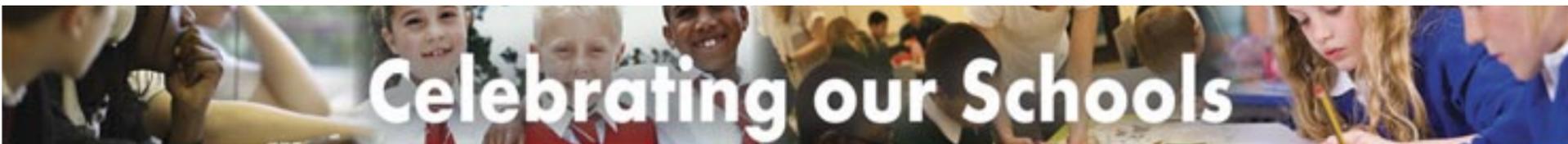
When he became ill from cancer, Fr David had said to a friend, 'I have been preaching on the resurrection for all these years and I had better show that I believe in it.' Like Felix Randall, and like Emile, he was sustained by Christian hope. These times are a test for all of us who are believers: can we live out what we profess?

And for those among us who are unsure

what to believe, this plague brings no new questions about the after-life. It only brings into focus the questions we often prefer to push aside.

That same week, our Sunday prayer list for the deceased was not exceptionally long. But it included one of our own Communities, a diminutive, indomitable, Irish nurse, with an enormous smile and an even bigger heart, who had helped to found our Sisters in Nigeria, and had lived there for many years - another unique, precious, irreplaceable, Christian soul.

Another life lived faithfully and to the full. Another who will be mourned in all her glorious specificity, and welcomed by name into the Kingdom. And no, she didn't have any viruses. And that's not important either. *St. Margaret Atkins*



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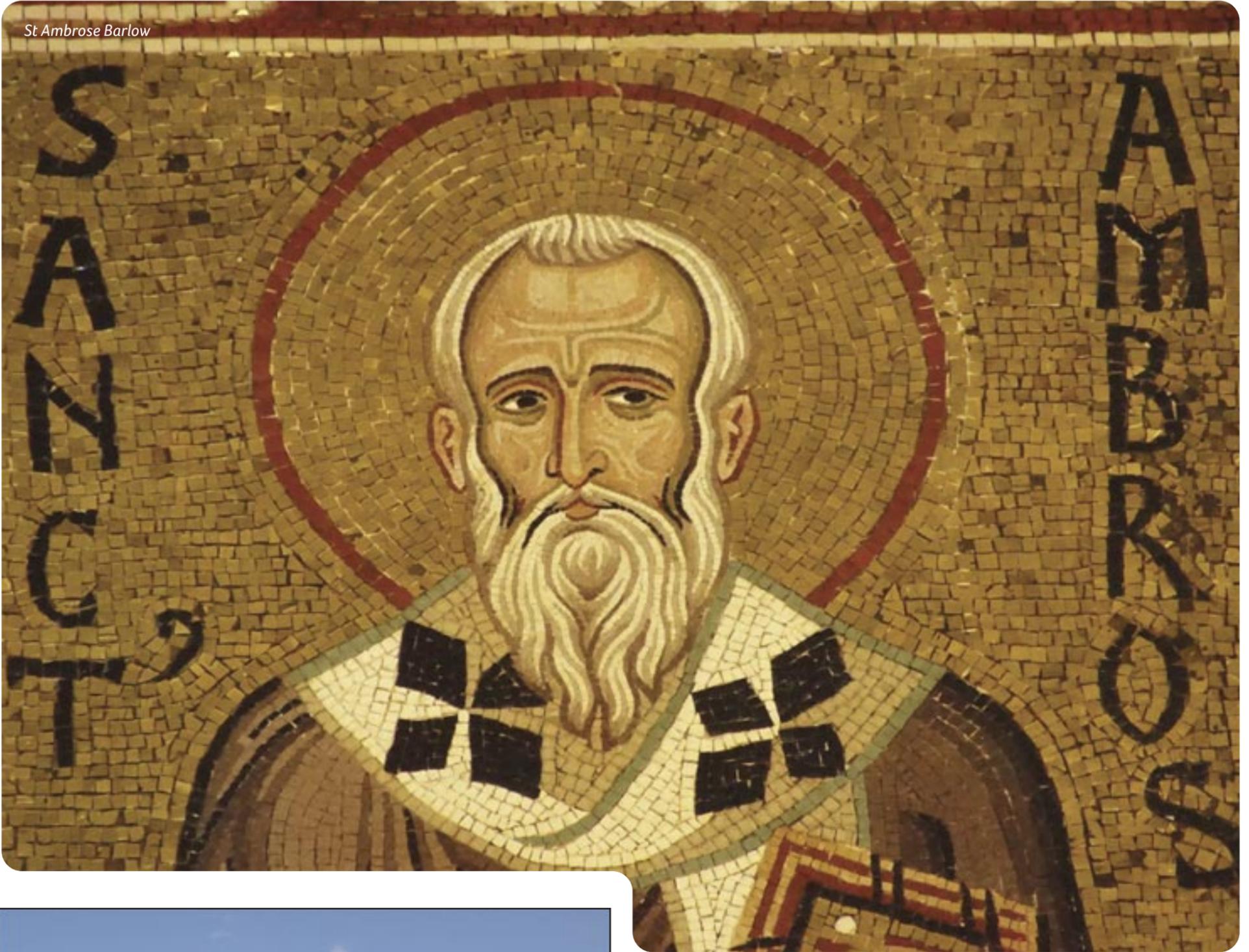

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The cause for the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales, which eventually took place on 25 October 1970, had its roots in the mid-19th Century when, following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales in 1850, Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman and Cardinal Henry Manning, successive Archbishops of Westminster from 1850 until 1892, led a campaign for the recognition of those who had been Martyred for the faith.

Just a year previously, in 1849, Frederick William Faber had written the rousing hymn Faith of Our Fathers in memory of the Martyrs. Born and raised an Anglican, Faber converted and was ordained a Priest later becoming an Oratorian Father, the congregation founded by St Philip Neri to which St John Henry Newman also belonged. By 1935 nearly two hundred Reformation Martyrs had been beatified, earning the title 'Blessed', but only two, John Fisher and Thomas More, had been canonised; both on 19 May 1935 by Pope Pius XI.

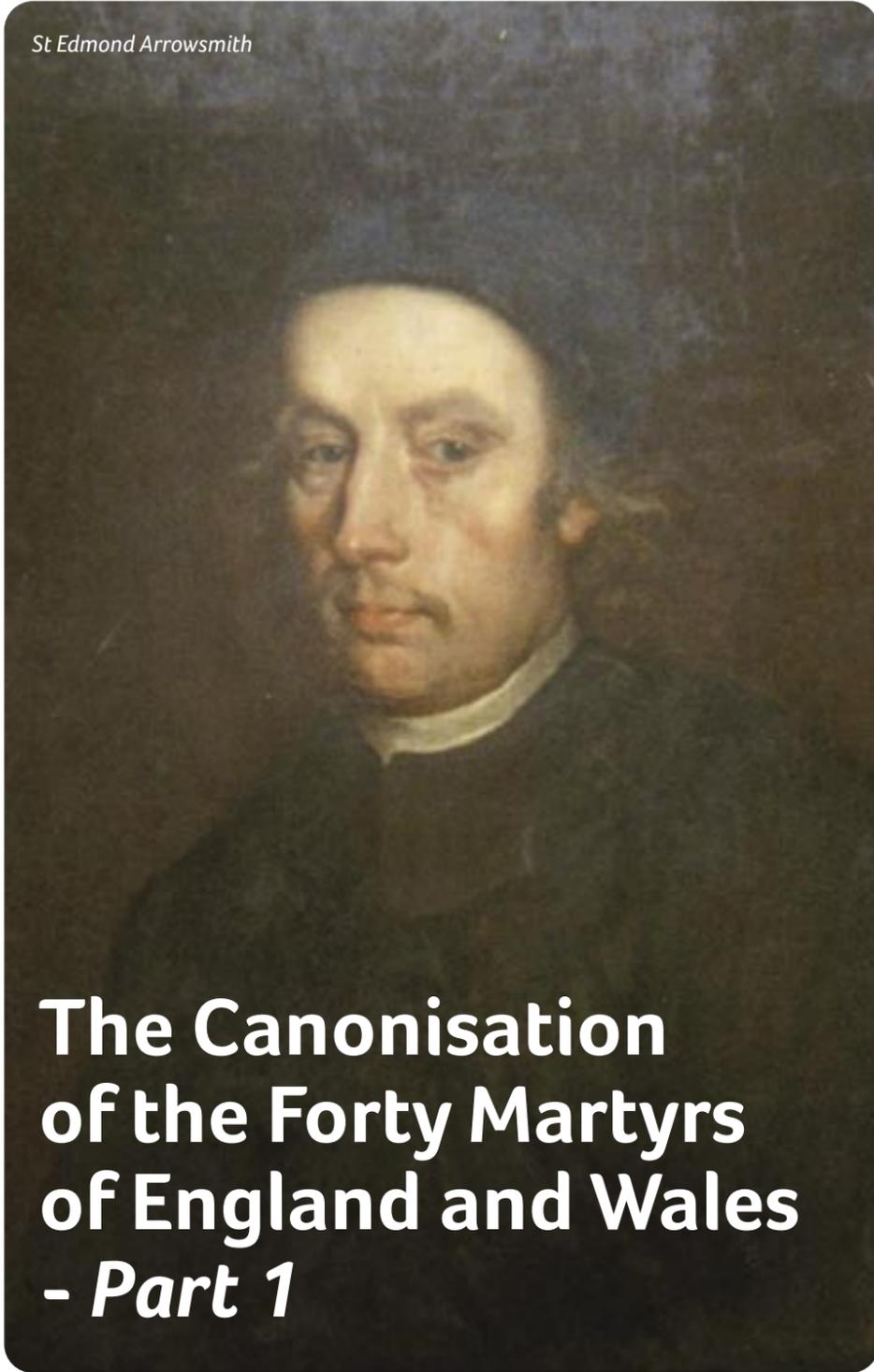
Following the end of the Second World War, the cause, which had been largely dormant for some years, was gradually revived and, in December 1960, the names of thirty four English and six Welsh Martyrs were submitted to the Sacred Congregation of Rites by Cardinal William Godfrey, Archbishop of Westminster. All of these had been Martyred between

1535 and 1679. The list of names was drawn up in consultation with the Bishops of England and Wales and an attempt was made to ensure the list reflected a spread of social status and religious rank, together with a geographical spread and the existence of a well-established devotion. Of the forty, thirty three were Priests (*twenty Religious and thirteen Secular*) and seven were lay people. It is worth noting that around a quarter of these Martyrs came from within the historic boundaries of the County Palatine of Lancashire, a reminder, albeit a poignant one, that Lancashire remained a true stronghold of the faith despite the persecutions and difficulties that brought.

The Forty Martyrs of England and Wales put forward for canonisation (*in order of Martyrdom*) were:

- John Houghton, 4 May 1535, Tyburn
- Robert Lawrence, 4 May 1535, Tyburn
- Augustine Webster, 4 May 1535, Tyburn
- Richard Reynolds, 4 May 1535, Tyburn
- John Stone, ? Dec 1539, Canterbury
- Cuthbert Mayne, 30 Nov 1577, Launceston
- Edmund Campion, 1 Dec 1581, Tyburn
- Ralph Sherwin, 1 Dec 1581, Tyburn
- Alexander Briant, 1 Dec 1581, Tyburn
- John Paine, 2 April 1582, Chelmsford
- Luke Kirby, 30 May 1582, Tyburn
- Richard Gwyn, 17 Oct 1584, Wrexham

St Edmond Arrowsmith



The Canonisation of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales - Part 1

- Margaret Clitherow, 25 March 1586, York
- Margaret Ward, 30 August 1588, Tyburn
- Edmund Gennings, 10 Dec 1591, Gray's Inn
- Swithun Wells, 10 Dec 1591, Gray's Inn
- Eustace White, 10 Dec 1591, Tyburn
- Polydore Plasden, 10 Dec 1591, Tyburn
- John Boste, 24 July 1594, Durham
- Robert Southwell, 21 Feb 1595, Tyburn
- Henry Walpole, 7 April 1595, York
- Philip Howard, 19 Oct 1595, The Tower
- John Jones, 12 July 1598, Southwark
- John Rigby, 21 June 1600, Southwark
- Anne Line, 27 Feb 1601, Tyburn
- Nicholas Owen, 2 March 1606, The Tower
- Thomas Garnet, 23 June 1608, Tyburn
- John Roberts, 10 Dec 1610, Tyburn
- John Almond, 5 Dec 1612, Tyburn
- Edmund Arrowsmith, 28 August 1628, Lancaster
- Ambrose Barlow, 10 Sept 1641, Lancaster
- Alban Roe, 31 Jan 1642, Tyburn
- Henry Morse, 1 Feb 1645, Tyburn
- John Southworth, 28 June 1654, Tyburn
- John Plessington, 19 July 1679, Chester
- Philip Evans, 22 July 1679, Cardiff

- John Lloyd, 22 July 1679, Cardiff
- John Wall, 22 August 1679, Worcester
- John Kemble, 22 August 1679, Hereford
- David Lewis, 27 August 1679, Usk

Thirty four had been hanged, drawn and quartered, the most grisly form of execution reserved for traitors, whilst three had been hanged, one had died under torture, one had died in prison awaiting execution and, perhaps, one of the most well-known, Margaret Clitherow, had been crushed to death using the door of her house, weighted by rocks, the whole pressing down on a small but sharp rock placed under her back.

On 24 May 1961, the re-opening of the cause was formally decreed by Pope John XXIII. It was no surprise, therefore, that once the list of forty names had been submitted, and the decree issued, the Diocese of Lancaster was quick off the mark in organising a rally in support of the cause. Other rallies, pilgrimages, and events were organised, including an annual 'Martyrs Sunday', throughout England and Wales, as a concerted effort was made to progress the cause.

Read about the Forty Martyrs Rally in Preston in the September's edition.

David Gorman

St John Plessington



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CATHOLICS AND OUR COMMON HOME
 SR MARGARET ATKINS

Caring for The Planet in A Time of Crisis



Readers will be interested to know that to celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of Laudato Si', Sr. Margaret Atkins' CTS pamphlet, Catholics and Our Common Home has been reprinted in a revised version, with the new subtitle, **Caring for The Planet in a Time of Crisis**. The pamphlet is available from <https://www.ctsbooks.org/>

What people need today is an "ecological conversion." *"Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience"* – Pope Francis.

Regarding the environment, Pope Francis identifies two groups of Catholics: The critical and the indifferent. A third group might consist of those who are willing, even enthusiastic, but who feel discouraged about the possibility of making any real difference. By unpacking Church tradition and teaching, and bridging the gap between theory and practice, this booklet will challenge the first, stir up the second, and encourage the third.



Diamond Jubilee

Fr John Foulkes one of our retired priests celebrated 60 years in the priesthood earlier in June, Fr John now lives in the parish of St Peter's Lytham. He celebrated his first Mass on Trinity Sunday 1960 at St Joseph's, Ansdell. Ad Multos Annos!

Your Letters

Send us your letters:

Write to: **The Editor,**
99, Commonsides, Ansdell,
Lytham St. Annes, FY8 4DJ.
 Email to: voicemails@hotmail.co.uk

- Please keep your letters concise (max 300 words),
- Include your full name and address
- Letters should not include any personal criticism or attacks
- The editor reserves the right to:
 - amend or shorten letters or to refuse to publish them (no correspondence to discuss decisions taken will be entered into)
 - publish a response if deemed appropriate

Dear Editor

I wish to send a big thank you to everyone who collected tins of food, dried food stuffs, toiletries and cleaning items etc; for the Food Bank at the Salvation Army, Preston, in May.

Thank you to everyone, parents, friends, families and businesses who all made this possible, to all the guys from Preston Impact Youth Group and the EmpowHER-COHORT 3 young women. It took three car journeys to deliver it all. Our theme of Kindness is to create a sense of social justice and equality for everyone.

Best wishes
 Terry Mattinson

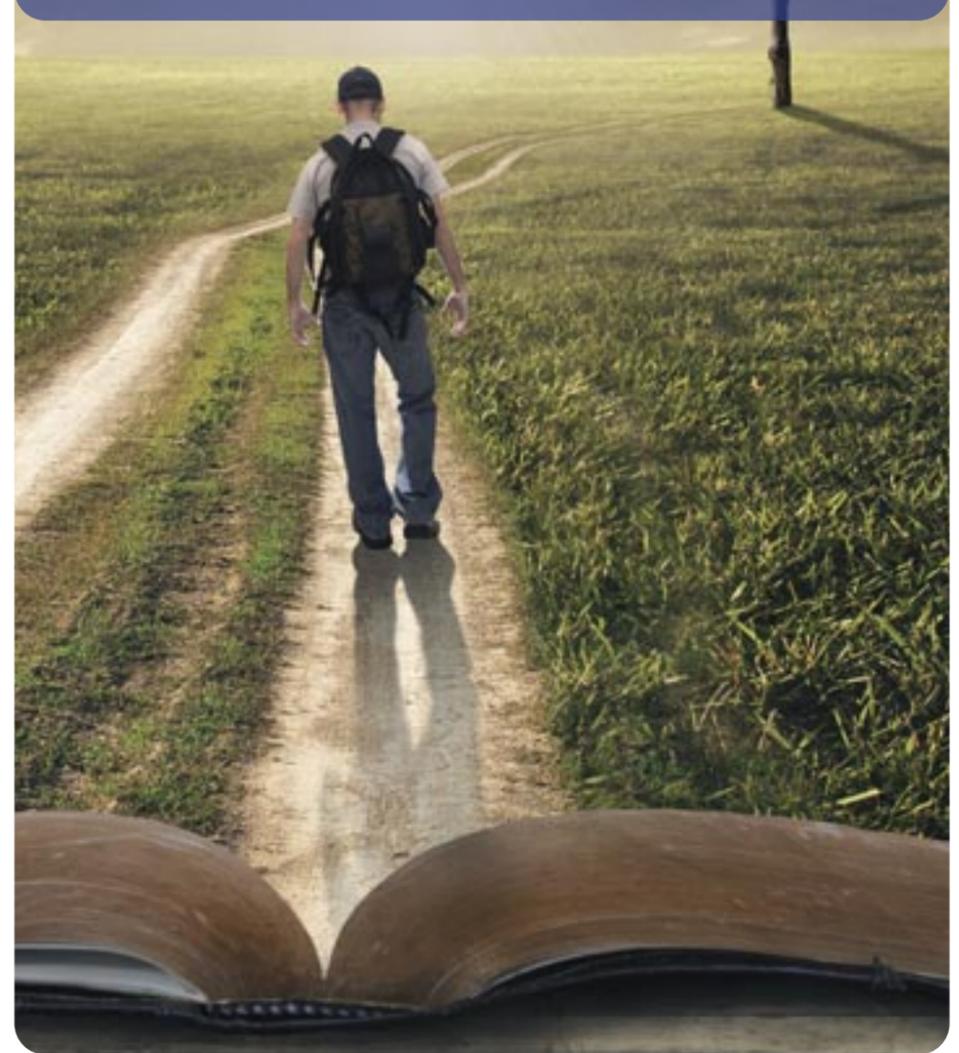
Dear Editor

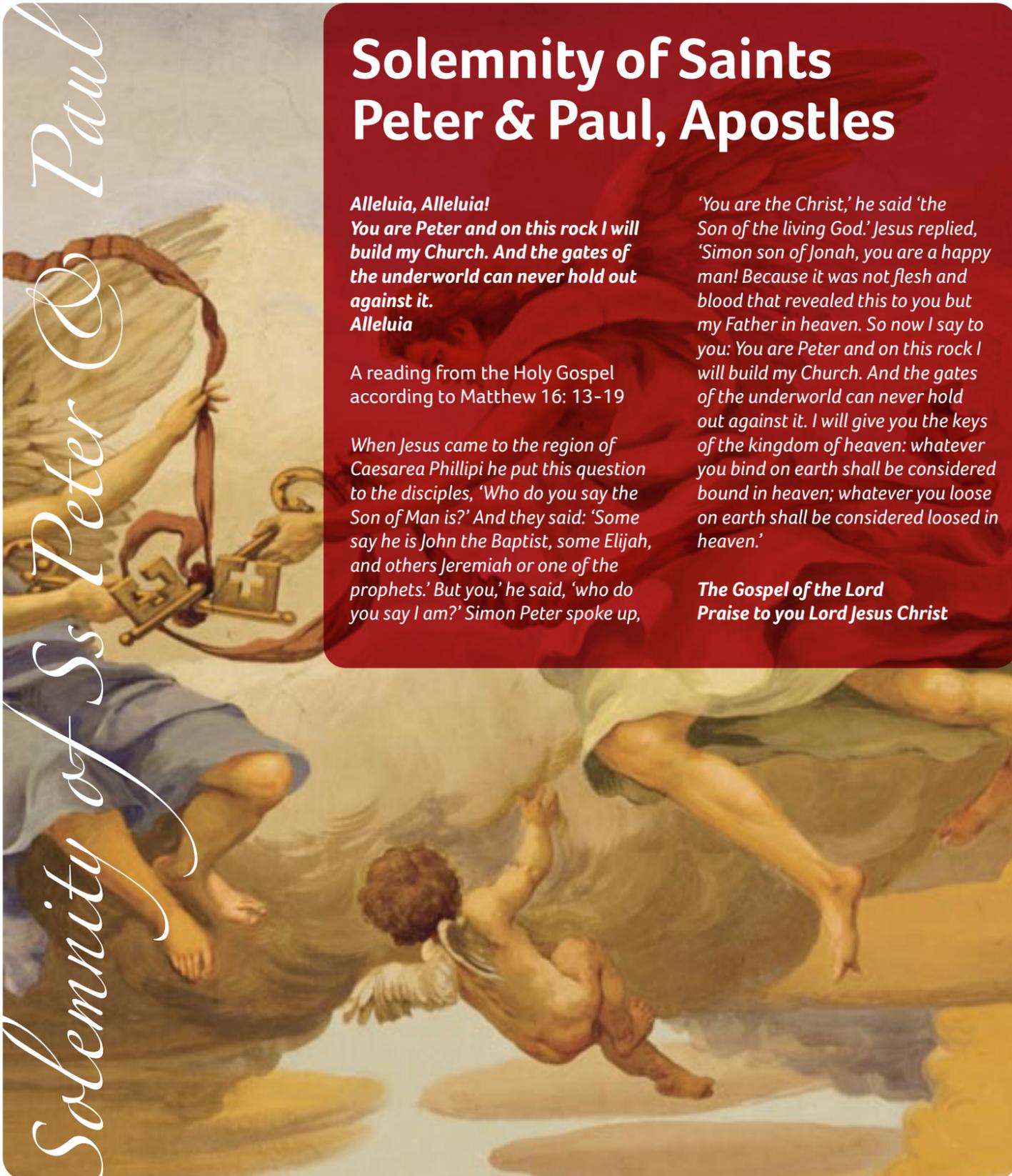
It never stop amazing me how God can transform bad things into something good. This lockdown has been in so many ways a blessing for us. All family and friends, so far, are healthy; my two teenagers daughters have never had a better relationship, ...even my garden never looked so great.

We found an alternative way in the streamed services from our local church of St Clare's, (Preston); Masses, prayers, adoration, devotions, ... all of which, despite not being our parish, made us feel that it was the right place for us. Our own parish, St Gregory's, weekly bulletin, and the Hymns our stupendous choir director sends us, keep us going, indeed, singing all day.

Also, I am part of a weekly ecumenical group of Lectio Divina, an old form of prayer, within the Xaverian Spiritual Centre, (Preston). We decided to keep doing Lectio, though each one at home, all praying united in Christ. We interchange our reflections and we support each other through email and even the group has grown. Afterwards, our reflections are posted in the Xaverian's web. This is a great source of strength for me, and made me even more conscious of the Holy Spirit's action through all of us. When anxiety and worries appear, the *'Do not be afraid'* comes to mind. I know that whatever must happen, will happen...but Our Lord will help me to see me through. I have no fear, for I am in God's hands. Thank you Lord for never abandoning us.

May the Lord bless you all and keep you safe
 Menchu Benavides-Guijarro, St Gregory's, Preston





Solemnity of Saints Peter & Paul, Apostles

Alleluia, Alleluia!
You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it.
Alleluia

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 16: 13-19

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Phillipi he put this question to the disciples, 'Who do you say the Son of Man is?' And they said: 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' Simon Peter spoke up,

'You are the Christ,' he said 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So now I say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

+++ HOMILY ++++++

“You are Peter, and I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”

The Apostles Peter and Paul: the great apostolic pairing, celebrated for centuries on or near to June 29th. Although it is recorded that they may only have met twice (*Acts 15 and mentioned in Galatians 2*), both of them were pivotal movers in the development of the early Church and the understanding of the faith.

The preface for the feast today tells us of their significance within the story of the faith: *“Peter foremost in confessing the faith, Paul it’s outstanding preacher. Peter who established the early Church from the remnant of Israel, Paul, master and teacher of the gentiles that you call”*. Both of them ended their lives giving glory to God by martyrdom in Rome. Peter, whom tradition tells us was crucified upside-down so that he did not emulate the death of the Lord, is commemorated on the Vatican hill above the necropolis where he was buried (*St Peter’s Basilica*). Tradition also tells us that the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul was a beheading by a sword, and it is commemorated at the site called The Three Fountains (*Tre Fontane*) near the Basilica of St Paul outside the Walls, heading out of Rome toward the ancient port of Ostia.

Both men had the energy of ones who were Apostles...ones who the Lord sent on their mission. Peter, a man of several foibles, but who professed the heart of the gospel faith at Caesarea Philippi when he acclaimed Jesus as the Christ. Paul had zeal

and energy as a Pharisee, when as Saul, he began rooting out the first followers of Christianity. Following his conversion to Christ, and his taking the new name of Paul, his zeal for Christ intensified as he worked to bring the gospel message to the gentile world. Together, with those first apostles instituted by Christ, the lives of St Peter and St Paul give us qualities of the faith which are as true for today as they were in the first century: that the faith is centred on Jesus as the Christ, and that His mission, our mission, is to make his gospel message known and loved.

As people of the Faith we need always to be united with Christ and with each other, centred around the successor of St Peter. We need also to have the energy wisdom and drive which St Paul had amongst his several gifts, so that Christ and his gospel will be known to people of all situations and cultures. What we have received...we hand on and, please God, as we hand it on, the faith is deepened and enriched by our living of it.

As humanity looks for life beyond the limitations of the Covid-19 pandemic, as we look for a better and deeper appreciation of human worth which is beyond the colour of skin and economic success, we invite the prayers of SS Peter and Paul, who were so close to the Lord in taking forward his mission, that they will speak to the heart of humanity today and assist the Church in our gospel mission.

Fr Stephen Pearson, Cathedral Dean Lancaster


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14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Alleluia, Alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children.
Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 11:25-30

Jesus exclaimed: 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my

Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

+++ HOMILY ++++++

"I am gentle and humble in heart"



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Great portrait artists will give you more than just a good likeness, they will try to reflect the character of their subject and give you a glimpse behind the eyes so that you can see what sort of a person this really is.

Today's Gospel gives us a wonderfully revealing word portrait of Jesus Our Lord. Matthew puts the portrait in front of us, but the words come from Jesus himself, revealing who he is. Within a few verses we hear Our Lord at prayer, revealing his intimate connection with his Father, and then we hear his loving words directly to us, inviting and drawing us with great gentleness into the centre of this Divine love.

"Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light."

What a loving invitation this is, with a deep concern for our many burdens, and a gentle and humble approach to us. The Son of God invites all who are weighed down by the many burdens of life to find new strength and even peace and rest by being firmly attached to him. Our Lord invites us to come to him and exchange the yoke, the burden that weighs us down, for a new yoke, a new attachment to him which is not a burden but a connection, a partnership with the one who invites us to learn from him, for he is "gentle and humble in heart, and

you will find rest for your souls." At the heart of this Gospel is Our Lord's deep and personal invitation to each one of us to receive his friendship, a friendship which unites us into the heart of God. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, directly reflects this Gospel. It is a devotion to Jesus in his sacred humanity, as a loving person, who is gentle and humble in heart, approaching us with deep respect, gentleness and love, it is the portrait we see in this Gospel. And in the portrait which is coming together we see two hands stretched out towards us to welcome us home, a visual picture of that invitation "Come to me".

When we have this image of Our Lord's generous love in front of us in words or pictures we know we are being called to imitate that generous love in the heart of the Son of God. We are being called to reflect a love that is not grudging or measured out, but truly generous. Father and mother love their children freely without calculation of a return.

True love between husband and wife is not a calculated deal but a free gift. The love that we are called to share with all who need our love also needs to come from a generous heart. All these everyday attitudes of life are our true and best response to the God who reveals himself in the loving heart of Christ. In this Gospel we see a vivid picture of the loving character of our Saviour. He is the one who invites us to come to him to be at home in the strength of his love.

Fr Patrick Hibbert, St Annes on Sea

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time



15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Alleluia, Alleluia!
The seed is the Word of God, Christ the sower, whoever finds this seed will remain forever.
Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 13: 1-9

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth to the earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise be to you Lord Jesus Christ

+++ HOMILY ++++++

“Some seed fell into rich soil, and produced its crop”

At this time of year in the rural communities that I know, in both Cumbria and Lancashire, there would normally be a round of village shows held in village halls or marquees. At these events folk gather together and bring in their produce: things they have grown, such as vegetables, fruit, plants and flowers or things they have made, like bread, cakes and pies, along with various crafts and hobbies.

These gatherings recognise the gifts and talents of the participants and there is the usual judging with the presentation of rosettes and prizes for first, second and third place. Entrants come from all ages and there is a great sense of pride in what

has been produced, either from a seed, well cultivated and nourished from the soil over time, or in something created thoughtfully by hand in the kitchen or work room. This year such gatherings will be missed in our communities.

As the village show celebrates the fruits of the earth, today's Gospel parable of the Sower celebrates the fruits of God's Kingdom in the lives of those who welcome his Word and allow it to take root in them.

Jesus teaches the crowd from a boat: 'Imagine a sower going out to sow.' He paints a picture of agricultural life at the time. In Galilee the terrain was uneven

and hilly. It was only on the narrow strips of land in the valleys or on the edge of the river banks that seed could be sown. The sower in the parable scatters seed widely and therefore some falls on the path. This seed would be carried away by birds or trodden on by passers-by. The rocky soil was also a reality, covered perhaps by just a thin layer of earth. Here the seed shoots up quickly and, with having no depth to its roots, is soon scorched by the sun.

The point of the parable comes when we reach the description of the good soil which enables maximum growth and flourishing. This good soil is potentially the World, meaning every person, every soul.

We are the soil for the seed of God's Grace received in Baptism and nourished by Word and Sacrament, together with a life of prayer and service of God and neighbour. How well is the soil of your life receiving the Word of God now in these challenging days?

Perhaps, above all, to grow in our understanding of God's living Word requires patience; something that can be in short supply for many of us, especially in difficult times. Patience! Let's pray for this gift, so we can become more and more the receptive, loving, grateful, compassionate, understanding soil that Christ longs for us to be.

Fr. John Winstanley, Penrith and Alston



The Patience of St. Francis de Sales

The most patient are often those who have to struggle most against impatience. By resisting the impetuosity, annoyances, and tedium of life with calm, one grows little by little to be patient. St. Francis' example in this regard is especially admirable. By nature, he was fiery and temperamental, but through constant training, he became as calm as the moon. As a Bishop, he received many persons each day, pestering him with requests or questions. Once, a certain nobleman asked him for a special favour, which St. Francis gently explained was not possible. The quick-tempered man accused him of duplicity and even threatened him. St. Francis tried to use calm words but received even more insults. When the man left, St. Francis' acquaintance wondered how he held back his anger. St. Francis said he understood that this person was a friend and was only speaking through his anger. Rather than respond with impatience he simply diverted his attention to other matters and so remained calm. Quite frequently, an elderly lady

visited him with questions about religion. Although he had thousands of other concerns, St. Francis always treated her with kindness and patiently answered all her inquiries. Examples of patience abound from St. Francis' life, but equally helpful are his wise counsels. Here are a few gems, "Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset." Again, "Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them - every day, begin the task anew." "Dispose your soul to tranquility in the morning, and be careful during the day to recall it frequently to that state, and to keep your soul within your control." He frequently recommends meditation on Christ's sufferings as a means to acquire patience: "When it is our lot to suffer pain, trials, or ill-treatment, let us turn our eyes upon what Our Lord suffered, which will instantly render our sufferings sweet and supportable."

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Alleluia, Alleluia!
 May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.
Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 13: 24-30

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted

and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said: "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?" "Some enemy has done this" he answered. And the servants said, do you want us to go out and weed it out?" but he said, "No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let it both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn."

The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

+++ HOMILY ++++++

“Let them both grow till the harvest”

Our Lord loved to use parables to illustrate His teaching, perhaps because the stories and images He uses always have several layers of meaning, and so provide rich pickings for our reflection and prayer. Just now and again, though, He explains an image to His disciples in private, once the crowds have gone away. Read on a few lines from today's parable of the wheat and the darnel and we hear the Lord explain everything: He is the sower; the devil is the enemy who sows the darnel; the good seed are God's people, and the bad seed represents those who do evil and oppose the Lord's Kingdom. It all seems very straightforward.

Yet always with the parables there are several layers of meaning. We know that life is complicated; we are complicated. There are not simply 'good' and 'bad' people; there is good and bad in each of us. Within us there are so many shoots of goodness, faith and love growing within us, watered by the grace of baptism, enlightened by God's Word; fed by the Eucharist. But we also know that in every human heart there is darnel: selfishness, pride, the things which prevent us from showing love to God and others. Our hearts are fields in which good and bad exist side-by-side – it's a consequence of our fallen nature.

Today's parable, then, gives us a message

of hope: God is patient with us. God's way is not our way. So often we want to make everything perfect immediately, rooting out all the darnel. But God knows that sometimes this destroys the wheat as well. So He is patient. He allows the two to exist side by side, so that the wheat, the goodness in us, can be given every chance to grow. God does not simply do away with what is evil: He gently, slowly, patiently calls us to conversion. He knows how weak we are, how slow we are to change. So He waits patiently, and gently gives us the gifts we need to let the goodness within us grow.

If patience is good enough for God, it must be good enough for us too. We must never judge ourselves more harshly than God judges us – otherwise, we claim to be a higher authority than Him! We must accept that change usually comes very slowly, whilst always striving as much as possible to grow in God's grace.

Let's take heart from the encouraging words of St Paul, who tells us that the Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. Although he speaks of prayer, it's true in every aspect of our lives. May the Holy Spirit help the goodness within us to grow ever stronger, and may patience – one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit – be given us in abundance. Patience with others, and patience with ourselves.

Fr. Andrew Allman, Preston

Facing the Truth

by Julia Beacroft

The worst seems to be over as we are now definitely coming out of lockdown from the coronavirus pandemic. Thanks be to God! It has been a challenging time for many of us and it's good to start feeling and believing that life is getting back to normal – sort of. I wouldn't really describe myself as a 'glass half full' kind of person and there is little doubt that I've found the last several months difficult. But I think that every cloud has a silver lining if we look for it and the lockdown has proved to be no exception.

Honest

Of course, it could be my imagination, but I do believe that there has been a spirit of kindness and generosity among people, as they have tried to make sure that those less able than themselves are cared for. The other blessing which has come to the fore during this time is technology. We've used Skype, Zoom and Teams to be able to speak to others face-to-face, emails, texts and What's App for communicating the written word and social media has probably never been so popular!

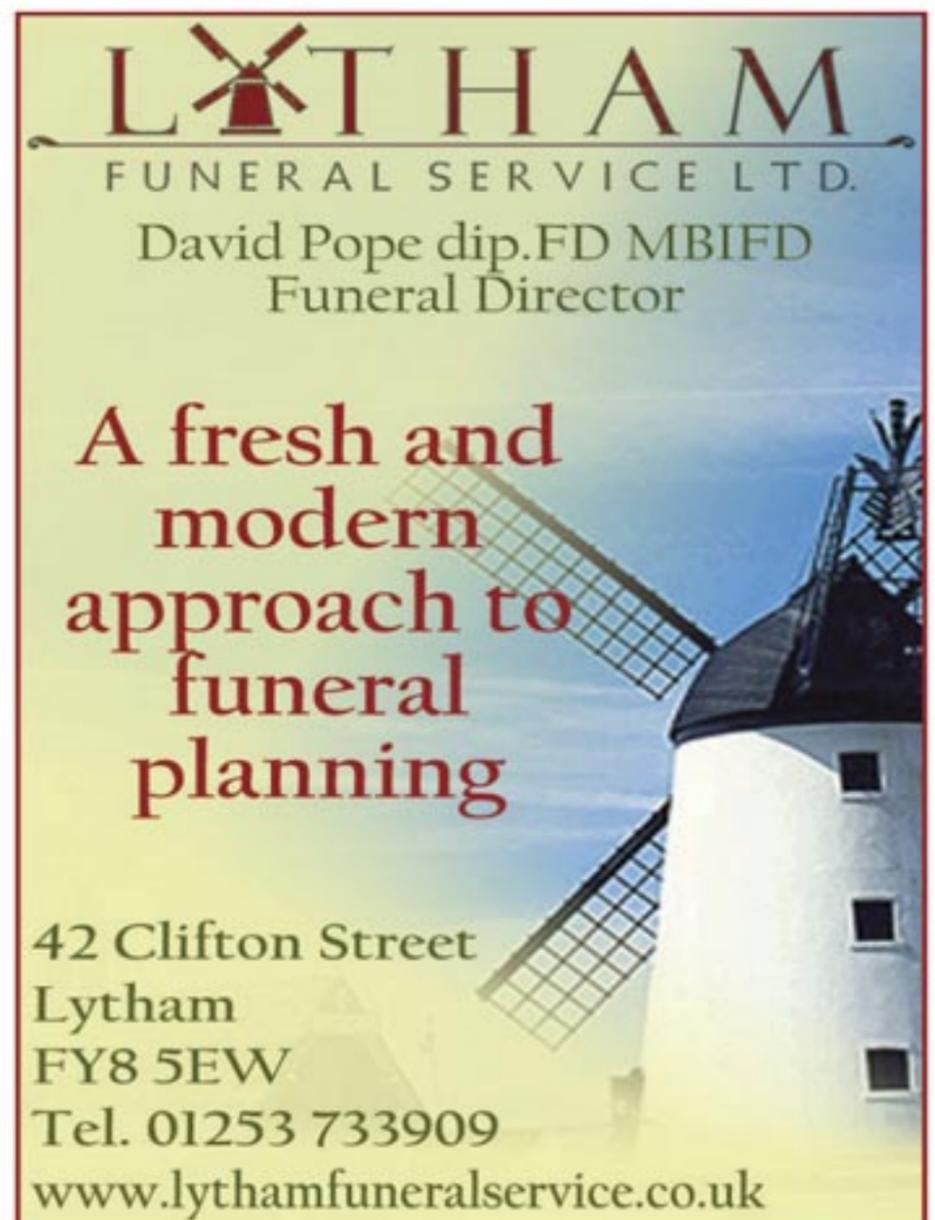
My own contribution to social media is not huge but I have to admit that I do enjoy Facebook. It's a great way of not only keeping in contact with people but re-opening those contacts which have lapsed, for whatever reason. I'm also interested to note that while we all present our 'mask' or 'face to the world', people are often inclined to be really honest on the platform of social media and Facebook in particular.

Mission

Facebook is not perfect of course, and there have been incidences when sadly it has been misused. However, it strikes me that in a world where so many do not know the Lord and are searching to satisfy a restlessness within themselves, but are unsure as to what this is, that social media is a perfect tool for evangelising – for introducing others to the light of Christ. There are those who already have Facebook groups to accomplish this, but it is even more effective when we just mention our faith on our own timelines, for example. One needs to be quite brave to do such a thing, but the truth is that Christ gave us a mission to go out and spread the Gospel message to the whole world.

Recently our interactions with others have been severely curtailed but we have had access to technology to help overcome this. As we come together in our communities again, may we be able to show the face of Christ to others in our words and actions. And not forgetting to use social media to do the same thing. May we be able to share the profound reality: 'Christ is the way, the truth and the life' so that others too may desire to seek his face.

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Sea Sunday 2020

Sea Sunday 2020 will be celebrated on Sunday, 12th July. On Sea Sunday the Catholic Church, along with other churches, remembers seafarers and prays for them, their families and those who support them. It is the principal fundraising and awareness raising event of the year.

For different ways to contribute please visit www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/ways-donate or if you are signed up for planned giving in your parish please donate using the envelope provided.

During lockdown Chaplains have been unable to fulfil their ministry to seafarers and over the weeks several of them have written some short reflections one of which we reproduce below:

Anchor ourselves in God's love
In my lockdown I only see the images of

what's going on in the outside world, one remarkable picture is people locked into boxes, two metres away from each other - the queuing outside supermarkets.

I've never had to do that and I try putting myself into the picture. I would be nervous in my little square with an eye on those around me if they dare sneak an inch into my space. I am anchored to the spot until I get called forward into the next square.

Pondering on this led me to something far more familiar to me - ships queuing at anchor waiting on their turn to be called forward into the next slot until eventually being called into the great marketplace of the port.

For the crews at sea waiting at anchor can be a troubling stay, not knowing how long they will be kept there. Wondering when

“
Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realised that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us.
” Pope Francis

they will be able to come ashore and call their anxious families. It's not unheard of that a ship can be at anchor for weeks while greedy owners try to negotiate a better price for the cargo.

All queuing requires patience and an unflinching hope that the wait will end.

What are our own anchors, what is it that keeps us rooted in these difficult times?

Do these anchors hold fast or are the chains clanking and straining against the storm and high sea swell?

Being shut away with my own anchors I live in hope, not some vague aspiration that things can only get better, as beyond my window I see signs of spring

all around. The beauty of buds, shoots and blossoms all whisper that new life is coming. I see the extraordinary selflessness of people helping the less able. I rejoice at the skills of those who can save lives. The world around me is blooming, signs of promised hope bursting forth in a rich abundance.

God asks us to be still, treasure that richness while remaining anchored in his love.

In due course, on the fine tide that faith tells us will come, we can raise our anchors and store them safely aboard. *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain - Hebrews: 6:19*

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