

The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 332 + September '21

INSIDE: p08 The eyes of the world are on us ... p12 A new beginning A new mission ...



Congratulations Fr Stuart Chapple

r Stuart celebrated his first Mass at St Joseph's Preston on Sunday 27June following his ordination to the priesthood the day before by Bishop Paul Swarbrick.

Fr Stuart's first appointment will be to the Cathedral, Lancaster as assistant priest from 1 September.

Images from the actual ordination can be found on

Photo courtesy of Dave Gorman.

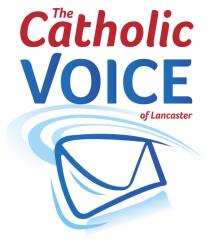


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Bishop Paul Swarbrick's homily on ordination of Rev Stuart Chapple

Reverend Fathers, Sisters and Brothers, my dear people, we are to witness and actually participate in something profoundly moving, the ordination of a Priest. Faithful to the tradition of the Church, established by Our Lord Jesus Christ, Stuart will be ordained into the Presbyterate of this Diocese. Shortly, we will hear more about what this entails. Stuart, before I begin my homily, I wish to greet your parents, lan and Cathy, your brother Philip and the extended family. It is a proud day for you, perhaps emotional, and a little puzzling. Christ has called your son; you have helped him hear that call, and helped him answer. I am grateful for all who have had any part in helping Stuart discern his vocation, both within the Diocese and beyond our borders. I express my thanks to Father Paul Keane (acting rector) and the staff at St.Mary's College, Oscott. Your years of careful work are bearing fruit. I bring to mind Father Giles, a key member of the staff, so recently gone to the Lord so soon after having been appointed rector. His death has been perhaps his greatest act of faithful service as one who has formed Stuart and so many others.

Our prayers are also with Fr. Michael Doleman recently appointed rector, who takes up his work in the autumn. I am delighted that so many of the clergy of this Diocese have travelled. For you, this is a day to reflect on your own call to the Priesthood. Let this day refresh and encourage you. It is wonderful to see the Cathedral so full again. I thank Father Pearson and all who care for this beautiful Cathedral, particularly all who have had a role in today's Liturgy. And to all gathered here, whoever you are and wherever you are from, welcome. We must not forget those who were unable to travel but who are very much with us in prayer and in joy today. We are aware of the Saints, big and little, official and unofficial, those who have gone before us marked with the sign of Faith. We pray that many will be moved to hear the Lord's call to serve as priests, and that many more will sense the call to holiness, drawn to follow Christ on the way of salvation.

Let us ignore Stuart for a moment, and turn – as we should and must – to Christ, and remember; What is important to Christ

is important to us. His absolute priority is to do the will of His Heavenly Father. He became man with the sole purpose of carrying out the work entrusted to Him. He teaches us that we are made in the image and likeness of God, that we are loved by the Father, and that we are all called to live the life of Grace, the life of the Blessed Trinity for all eternity. But, and it's a big but, sin has complicated matters, obscuring the Truth, distracting us and taking hope from us. An Irish poet, Padraig Pearse, executed just over 100 years ago, captured the heart of our dilemma in a simple phrase when he wrote,

'The beauty of this world hath made me sad, this beauty that will pass.'

If this world is all there is, if this life is all we have, then our joys are short-lived, they will not last, yet deep within us is a longing for something more, something better, a beauty that will last. Our Lord brings us this, and reminds us of this, and He makes it possible. This is the work of the Church, of all the Baptised, called to continue the Mission of Christ in the world, obedient to the Father's will. It is the role of the Priest to share Our Lord's work of re-awakening this reality in the lives of all, but particularly in the lives of the Faithhful. In his preaching, in his administering of the Sacraments, in his teaching, and above all, in offering the Divine Sacrifice as he stands at the altar. and brings us into the Passion, Christ's once-for-all offering of Himself to the Father for the salvation of sinners. Our Holy Father Pope Francis calls Bishops, Priests and deacons to 'have the smell of the sheep', effectively, to be one with the flock entrusted to them. That is important, but it is not enough to have the smell of the sheep. There is a story told of a man standing on the banks of a great river that was in flood. As he watched, he saw someone being washed down the river, obviously desperately trying to stay afloat but unable to swim. The watcher jumped into the water and managed to surface close to the drowning man. 'I can't swim either', he said, 'but I thought it would bring you comfort if I drown with you!' No, that won't do. He must offer something better. This leads us to reflect on a further point; the sheep must sense the smell of the Shepherd, and become aware



of another smell, which can be expressed less crudely. It is the odour of Sanctity, the Sacred.

The setting

'He asked Simon to put out a little from the shore. And He sat down, and taught the people from the boat.' Images are often more enduring than words. In this simple picture we are given a thought-provoking lesson. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, appears to distance Himself from the people. In fact, His astute action enables Him to be better seen and heard, without abandoning the people or His mission.

 He appears to leave us, but He is better able to teach us. A lesson for how we are called to live our priesthood in the world. Some may sense ordination as a separation from the rest, but it is rather a way given by Christ for us to do His work more effectively. The boat becomes His seat of learning. The sea conveys more clearly the sound of His voice.

Much in this world is exquisitely beautiful. That should not surprise us when we give thought to its Creator. Art, music, poetry, the inspiration of nature, friendships, all these deserve our admiration and thanksgiving. But they do not become an end in themselves. 'The beauty of this world hath made me sad, this beauty that will pass.' It is the work of the priest to constantly remind people of the Author of creation, its Divine origin, and so, its sacredness. The priest is the man who has not lost sight of this.

The task before us, the task given to us

Above all, it is the work of the lay Faithful to take the Faith into the world. It is their Mission, given in Baptism, accepted in Confirmation by which they are empowered with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. It can be a daunting vocation. It requires both competence and confidence. Once these two aspects are present, it is a task that will be an experience of Joy even in the face of apparently formidable opposition. The work especially of the Diocesan Priest is to nourish, equip, motivate and discipline the Faithful for their mission. He does this through the leadership he exercises in the celebration of the Sacraments – above all through his offering of the Eucharist together with his parishioners.

The forces of evil are determined to undermine the work of Christ and the Church. Battle is engaged! Goliath, the giant, threw down the challenge, 'Give me a man that we may fight together.' Ironically, it was a pagan, a man of war, Pilate, who recognised Jesus' calibre and declared, 'Behold, the man.' But it needed the Apostle Thomas, the man of Faith, to look at that same figure and say of Him, 'My Lord, and my God!' As a Diocesan Priest, you will spend much of your time amongst people who are mostly nominally counted as disciples. As you get to know your parishioners do not overlook how difficult it can be for them as they spend the greatest part of their time in the secular world and culture. They must work to pay their bills and feed their families. They must get along with their neighbours. They must use the same shops and roads as everyone else. They must breathe the same air. So, foster a deep love for them, and a deep respect and admiration. Don't be like the old Parish Priest who heard the door-bell ring and, as he got up to answer it was heard to mutter, 'O, heck. The enemy' Remember that priests are often spared many of the difficulties and worries they face.

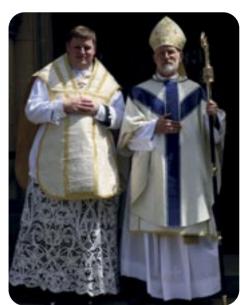
Mary, She is important to us because she is important to Christ her son. We are her children too. She forms us as His disciples and collaborators in the work of salvation, firstly by knowing who He is. He gave us to her; He gave her to us. She continues to form us; we are not yet what we must become. She knows the demands and difficulties we face, both from the world and from within ourselves. She knows the smell of the sheep and she knows the smell of the shepherd, the odour of sanctity. In your daily prayer may you sense her closeness, encouraging you to persevere particularly in your more difficult moments.

A request from the Editor – Due to some technical problems experienced in early July I have lost all my contact details from my database. I have managed to recover some of the detail but It would be help-ful, particularly if you are involved in the delivery process of the Catholic Voice, if you could drop me a test email so that that I can re populate my lists – thank you (edwinagillett@hotmail.co.uk)

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God Wills It

This article first appeared in the April 2020 (digital) edition of the Catholic Voice. Written by John Leneghan it charts the history of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Deus io vult, which translates into English as "God wills it" was the Vulgar Latin motto of the Crusades and is still used as the motto of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem (EOHSJ).

The EOHSJ is a legal entity in Canon Law as a Religious (*but not Pontifical*) Order of Chivalry under the protection of the Holy See with the Pope as its sovereign. It is one of only two such recognised by the Holy See, the other is the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

History

The Order dates its origin to the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 at the culmination of the First Crusade launched by Pope Urban II to prevent the destruction of Christianity in the land of Christ's birth by Fatimid (*Shia*) Caliphate Turks and the desecration of the church of Jesus' empty tomb on the site of His death and resurrection.

The Church had been split by the Great Schism of 1054 into Latin, based on Rome and the West, and Greek based on Constantinople and the East. The Patriarch of Ierusalem, a Greek named Simeon, had been forced into exile by the Turks and the victorious crusaders led by Godfrey of Bouillon appointed Daibert, one of their own and a Latin, as the new Patriarch for both Greek and Latin Rites with the right to appoint Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. These had the role of defending the newly established Canons of the Holy Sepulchre who were forbidden by Canon Law to take up arms. The knights came under the direct service of the crown when Godfrey died in 1100 and was succeeded by his brother Baldwin who took the title of King of Jerusalem, which Godfrey had declined.

In later texts Godfrey of Bouillon was listed with Charlemagne and his son Louis the Pious of France among those who took the cross and founded the Military Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre; the latter two posthumously!



Godfrey's sword is still on display in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

After the crusaders were finally expelled from the Holy Land in 1291 there was no longer any Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem but a small number of Franciscan Friars Minor who had remained in Cyprus returned in 1336. Their superior, the *"Custos"*, assumed the right to appoint new knights from among suitable men who had undertaken the extremely hazardous trials of a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. In this way, over the centuries 1,835 knights were invested into what was considered the most perfect form of knighthood.

Development of the Order

In 1847, the first year of his papacy, Pius IX restored the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem *(LPJ)*. The new Patriarch was given the right to invest new knights. Today the LPJ *(lpj.org)* is effectively the Diocese of the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel, Jordan and Cyprus.

In 1868 Pius IX reconstituted the EOHSJ to support the Church in the Holy Land by Prayer, Presence on Pilgrimage and by Financial Contributions.

In 1888 Pope Leo XIII approved the admission of women as Dames of the Holy Sepulchre; it wasn't until 1918 that a highly limited number of women were given the vote in UK.

Today there are, worldwide, 30,000 Knights, Dames and Clerics from 40 countries in 60 Lieutenancies. They are headed by the Cardinal Grand Master who is appointed by the Pope; Cardinal Fernando Filoni succeeded Cardinal Edwin O'Brien in 2019.

The Lieutenancy of England and Wales (*khs.org.uk*) was established in 1954. As at 1 January 2020 there were 599 members in 8 Sections. The Northern Section, comprising the Dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford and Shrewsbury was established in 1976 and has 102 members: 65 Knights, 26 Dames, and 11 Ecclesiastics

The Holy Land today

Christians were a majority in the Holy Land from the 5th century to the 11th despite the 7th century Islamic conquest,. After this their numbers gradually declined to become about 10% of the population by 1948. Today they constitute at most 2% of the population west of the Jordan and about 4% in Jordan where numbers are affected by the influx of refugees from Iraq and Syria.

These local Christians are largely Arabs and are still divided between Greek and Latin traditions. Half are Orthodox and the rest Catholics of either the Roman or various Eastern Rites. The Reformation did not happen within the Ottoman Empire so the Protestant presence is small.

As of December 2019, Israel's population stood at 9,136,000 of whom 2% (177,000) are Christian.

In a 2017 census, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics said the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza was 4,780,978 of whom 1.0–2.5% were Christian.

(Note: approximately 391,000 Israeli settlers lived in the West Bank {2016}; approximately 201,000 Israeli settlers lived in East Jerusalem {2014}. Of the Old City's 40,000 residents, 6,000 are Christian, with 3,000 of those Catholics, a number three times lower than it was 70 years ago.)

In 2019 the population of Jordan was estimated (*due to the increased flow of refugees*) at 10,458,413 of whom 4% (*416,000*) were Christian including 222,000 Catholics.

In 2018 the population of Cyprus was estimated at 1,189,265 with 78% Christian and around 1% Catholic.

The EOHSI's role today

The buildings of the Holy Places are no longer threatened as they were in the 11th century but are now a tourist attraction and even in danger of becoming lifeless museums. Meanwhile, the ages-old Christian Community, the *"Living Stones"*, are very much in danger of extinction.

The Order has the responsibility of ensuring that this does not happen. Through its frequent pilgrimages solidarity is demonstrated with the *"Living Stones"*.

Through its financial contributions support goes to: poor families; 41 primary and secondary schools which are open to all regardless of religion; Bethlehem University run by the De La Salle brothers with 3259 students; the Seminary in the Beit Jala district of Bethlehem with 30 minor and 20 major Palestinian and Jordanian seminarians; health care institutions; and today refugees.

Membership of the Order is by invitation only; it is offered to Roman Catholic men and women, lay or clerical, aged over 25, whose record of service to the Church and community indicates that they can be expected to make a significant contribution to the Order's work. As such it should be seen not as an honour but rather as a privileged opportunity for service.

Usually, though not always, a candidate is put forward by an existing Member of the Order.

Nowadays new members are invested in their own Lieutenancy but undertake to make, as soon as practically possible, the pilgrimage to Jerusalem where they receive their Pilgrim Shell from the Patriarch.

Any membership enquiry in regard to the Order can be directed to the national membership officer by emailing *membership*@eohsj.org.uk John Leneghan



"Well done good and faithful servant" Deacon Jim Wood retires from active ministry in Lancaster

The parish of St Peter's Cathedral and St Thomas More's church Lancaster celebrated the ministry of their parish deacon Rev Jim Wood as he achieved the age of 75 on Thursday 22nd July. Many parishioners paid personal tribute to Deacon Jim over the previous weekend Masses, but on the birthday itself gave Jim a small reception after the 12.15 Mass to mark his significant birthday. Together with Fr John Paul Evans who leaves the parish in early September, a Mass of thanksgiving is to be planned for mid-September when the work and presence of both individuals will be celebrated and honoured.

Deacon Jim retired early from his work at Lancaster University in 1999 and wanted to enter into service of the local community. His love of the church helped to discerned his vocation to the Diaconate, and he was ordained in 2003. But Jim also felt called to serve the locality within University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust. Indeed, more recently Jim's face became well known around the hospital and within the trust because of his appearance, along with other members of staff, on a campaign poster promoting clean hands!

Jim's diaconate also saw a spell assisting Fr Hugh Pollock at the Catholic Chaplaincy within Lancaster University, but through all this Jim remained a valued part of the clergy team at St Peter's Cathedral where he had been an active parishioner for many years. Our parish thank Jim for his years of dedicated service to God and to the people of Lancaster and wish him well in his "second retirement".

Fr Stephen Pearson, Cathedral Dean

Photo:

(L to R) Joan Fox, Fr Stephen Pearson, Deacon Jim Wood, Fr John Paul Evans, Joanna Booth. Photo courtesy of Damian Howard (Cathedral Director of Music)

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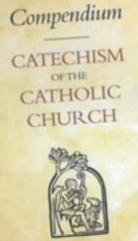
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Know Your Faith -What does the Church say about the Common Good



This month we dip into the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Compendium) and take a closer look at what the Church says about the Common Good. The numerical references relate to paragraphs in the Compendium.

405. What is the foundation of the authority of society?

Every human community needs a legitimate authority that preserves order and contributes to the realisation of the common good. The foundation of such authority lies in human nature because it corresponds to the order established by God.

Further reading 1897 -1902, 1918-1920

406. When is authority exercised in a legitimate way?

Authority is exercised legitimately when it acts for the common good and employs morally licit means to attain it. Therefore, political regimes must be determined by the free decisions of their citizens.

They should respect the principle of the *'rule of law'*, in which the law and not the arbitrary will of some, is sovereign. Unjust laws and measures contrary to the moral order are not binding in conscience.

Further reading 1901-1904, 1921-1922

407. What is the common good?

By the common good is meant the sum total of those conditions of social life which allow people as groups and individuals to reach their proper fulfilment.

Further reading 1905-1906, 1924

408. What is involved in the common good?

The common good involves: respect for and the promotion of the fundamental rights of the person, the development of the spiritual and temporal goods of persons and society, and the peace and security of all.

Further reading 1907-1909. 1925

409. Where can one find the most complete realisation of the common good?

The most complete realisation of the common good is found in those political communities which defend and promote the good of their citizens and of intermediate groups without forgetting the universal good of the entire human family.

Further reading 1910-1912, 1927

410. How does one participate in bringing about the common good?

All men and women according to their place and role they occupy participate in promoting the common good by respecting just laws and taking charge of the areas for which they have personal responsibility such as care of their own family and the commitment to their own work. Citizens also should take an active part in public life as far as possible.

Further reading 1913-1917, 1926



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Out of the Blue Reflecting on Laudato Si

O ut of the blue, most of the world has been invited on retreat. We have been forced to ponder our mortality, our vulnerability, our weakness, our ignorance. We have been prompted to repent of the collective thoughtlessness of our modern way of life and its side-effects. We have had to slow down, to abandon our ordinary routines, to wean ourselves from the addictions of *'business as usual'*. Our values have been overturned; care workers, fruit pickers, parcel packers and cleaners have become our new saints, while go-getters, celebrities and billionaires kick their feet in their own homes.

We have rediscovered our neighbours, and even our own families. We have shared our fears and anxieties; we have grieved together, even at a distance, for the wonderful individual human beings we have lost. We have publicly honoured courage, fidelity, and simple acts of kindness. We have learnt to value statesmanlike modesty, honesty and truthfulness over political bluster.

The religious among us have been praying more intensely, with more focus, than for decades, despite the disruption of our normal supports. And many, many others, who do not normally pray, have begun to join us, without embarrassment. We know that we cannot do this by ourselves.

And we have all been in this together; rich and poor, famous and unknown, old and young, strong and weak, from every corner of the globe, together, we have shared fear, anxiety, sorrow, compassion and love.

"Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise?" wrote Pope Francis five years ago in Laudato Si'. Suddenly, the noise stopped, and we had the chance to listen; listen to the sounds of nature, listen to the tradition of our faith, and listen once again to the Holy Father's appeal. Rereading Laudato Si' would not be a bad place now to train ourselves to listen again as we emerge from the COVID 19 restriction.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love, for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen. Sr. Margaret Atkins



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The Eyes of the World

That's the message CAFOD has been highlighting over the summer. This year, 2021, sees the UK hosting a unique combination of two major international events – the G7 meeting of government leaders from some of the world's richest nations, held in Cornwall in June and the crucial 'COP26' UN climate conference taking place in Glasgow in November. In playing host to such significant events, the UK Government has a chance to show global leadership in the quest for a just and green recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Reclaiming our Common home

But where does CAFOD come into it, and where do we as Catholics come into it? We are called not to stay silent and not to be passive. Pope Francis, and Pontiffs before him, have consistently called for a transformation of the way our global economy works and the ideology upon which it is built. For too long, it has been based on the pursuit of profit and growth, above care for people and our planet. For example, African countries will pay out more than \$10 billion in debt repayments in 2020 and 2021 alone. More than half will go to some of the richest companies in the world.

It is not just the coronavirus pandemic that is blighting the world: there is a climate pandemic, a debt pandemic, an unfair business pandemic... They are interrelated and have common causes, as identified by Pope Francis. We need to reclaim our common home from the deeply embedded ideologies, systems and practices that threaten nature and humanity, particularly the poor.

We know that small individual actions, done collectively, can be transformative. What better example than the story of the CAFOD founders: a small group of Catholic women, who decided to raise funds for a mother-and-baby clinic in the island of Dominica where children were starving. Sixty years later, we are part of Caritas Internationalis, one of the largest aid networks in the world, reaching out to people living in poverty in over 30 countries and campaigning for global justice so that everyone can live a full and dignified life. Yet CAFOD wouldn't exist if they hadn't taken action. They chose to put their faith into action. As Pope Benedict once put it, "... The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness..."

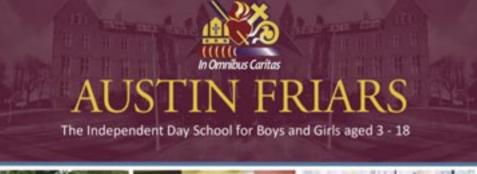
We need to: Reclaim nature Reclaim the world's land and resources Reclaim power

How can we play our part in this? You can sign CAFOD's petition to the Prime Minister asking that, in hosting COP26, he makes sure communities hardest hit by the climate emergency are listened to. Visit: www.cafod.org.uk/reclaim

Also, you can engage with your MP. It's easier than you think! And MPs can appreciate hearing from their constituents on these matters. I share two quotes from an MP in Lancaster Diocese reflecting on having met with CAFOD supporters: "Meeting you gives me the legitimacy to raise these questions – I can fairly say that I am representing the views of constituents" and "Meetings with altruistic people are a refreshing change from those with individuals pursuing a personal interest."

CAFOD's 'Parliament in your Parish' action over the spring and summer months has seen parishioners from across England and Wales arrange meetings with their MPs – with some recognisable names such as Theresa May amongst those involved. At the time of writing, around 10% of MPs in England & Wales had attended or were booked to attend these meetings, which have mainly taken place remotely thanks to technology such as Zoom. In some places, we have seen more than one parish group work together to meet the same MP, something that can perhaps help build a sense of community for us in these difficult times. Wouldn't it be wonderful for more MPs to hear the concerns of their constituents on such important issues, and how they, like us, can truly play their part in making a difference? If you'd like more information about meeting your MP, feel free to contact us at lancaster @cafod.org.uk

Whether or not the world finally takes the necessary steps towards a new style of life depends on all of us.





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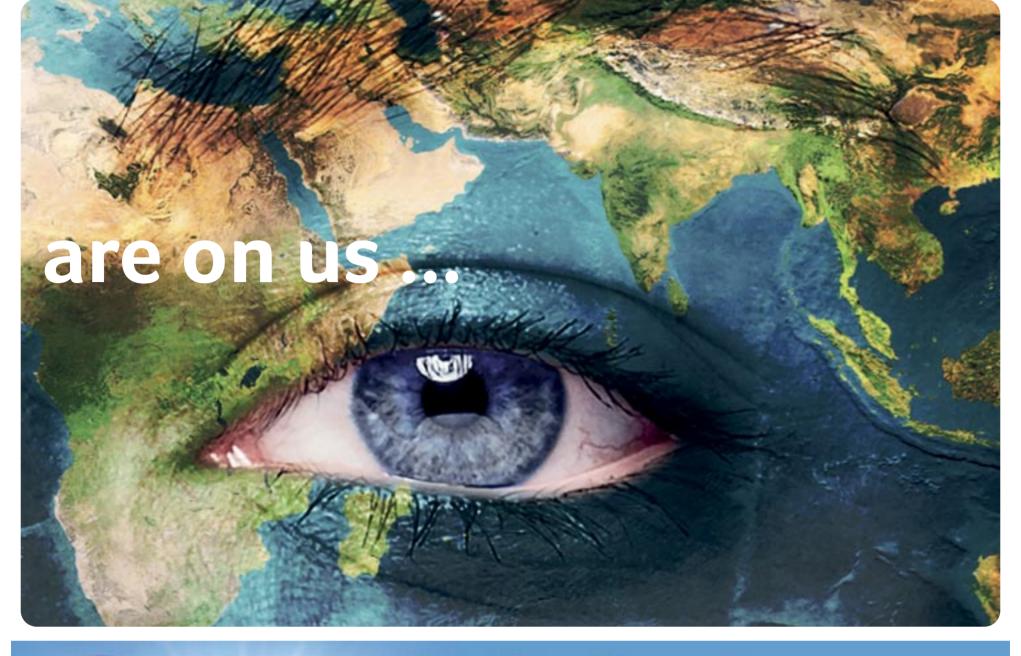
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Society of the Holy Child Jesus – Celebrating 175 Years





Sr. Philomena Grimley, Blackpool, provides a potted history of the contribution of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus to education in Blackpool and Preston.

E arlier this year there was a very special reunion on Zoom for former staff and students who attended Holy Child schools in Blackpool and Preston. About 90 people attended. The eldest were in their 90's! 2021 marks the 175th anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and their early story is closely linked with both Preston and Blackpool.

Background

The Society, a religious order for women, was founded by Cornelia Connelly in 1846. She was an American, born in Philadelphia in 1809 and her own story is quite remarkable. She married an Episcopalian priest, Pierce Connolly, and they had five children, though two died in early infancy. A few years after they were married the couple became Roman Catholics. When Pierce decided that God was calling him to be a Catholic

priest, Cornelia had to take a vow of chastity. She gradually came to realise that God was calling her in a new way to found a new religious order for the work of education, especially for girls, which was so urgently needed in 19th century England where Bishop, later Cardinal Wiseman, invited her to make a start in 1846. From humble beginnings in industrial Derby the group of sisters grew in number and they were able to begin foundations elsewhere. They taught children in parish schools; they ran night schools for factory girls; they set up small boarding schools for girls whose education was so neglected and inadequate in those days; and Cornelia began a teacher training college since no formal training was available at that time.

Beginnings in Blackpool: Parish Schools

In 1856 the first resident Roman Catholic priest in Blackpool, Father George

Bampton SJ, invited Cornelia to send some sisters to run the Poor School in the newly established Sacred Heart parish. In fact the school was set up before the church was opened in 1857. The sisters rented a small house in Queen's Square and taught in the cellar room of an inn that became the Railway Hotel. That was the beginning of Talbot Road School, renamed in 1951 as Sacred Heart School. Holy Child sisters served as head teachers and assistant teachers there for over 100 years. In 1904, as the town expanded, a second Roman Catholic parish was established in Blackpool, St Kentigern's; the sisters took charge of that school too and taught there until 1972.

Layton Hill

From the beginning Holy Child sisters, as well as running parish schools, established small boarding schools for girls. They brought twelve boarders with

them when they arrived in Blackpool. In 1859 as the numbers increased they leased Raikes Hall but soon that was not big enough and a more permanent home was needed. They purchased land outside the town and in 1870 opened the school at what was then called Layton Hill. It became both a boarding and a day school and over the years was destined to serve generations of girls from Blackpool and beyond.

Radical Changes

In the 1960's there were many educational changes in which all-age schools were abolished and the school leaving age raised. The Catholic 11-16 year old pupils were transferred to new schools, the boys to St Thomas' and the girls to St Catherine's, where a Holy Child nun, Sister Mary Parkinson, became head. In 1982, after two reorganisations, owing to the falling birth-rate, these schools merged with St Joseph's College and Layton Hill Convent school to form St Mary's, the town's Catholic comprehensive school Once again, a Holy Child nun, Sister Maureen Grimley, was appointed head teacher. In 1982 St Mary's was the largest Catholic school in England and Wales. In 1984 St Mary's was handed over to lay leadership. It continues to thrive to this day, proud of its history.

Preston

The Holy Child sisters' contribution to education in Preston from 1854 to 1990's in many parish schools and in Winckley Square Convent school is an equally impressive story but 'for another time'. Holy Child education today

There is no longer a Holy Child school

in Blackpool but two sisters live in the

parish of Christ the King, maintaining

close links with St Mary's School and

working in partnership with several

voluntary organisations in the town

the sisters continue the mission to

educate in educational projects and

schools in the United States, Nigeria,

Ghana and Chad. The Holy Child Schools

Network links the schools now under lay

leadership in the UK, Ireland and France

from Cornelia Connelly lives on to inspire

new generations. This is truly a cause for

For further information about the Society

of the Holy Child Jesus visit: www.shcj.org

ensuring that the educational legacy

celebration after 175 years!

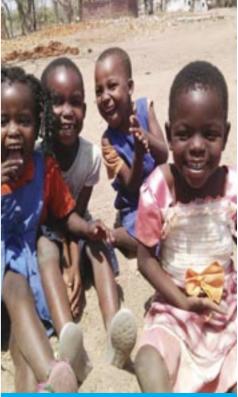
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Lisa Vallente-Osborne reports on a Lancaster parish initiative getting closer to nature and be(e)coming productive!

s the Covid 19 lockdown 1.0 saw most retreat to their homes; a new development at St Joseph's Lancaster began to emerge.

With the change in workload and daily rhythms, Fr Philip Conner began clearing a wasteland area at the back of the church and ordered seed to sow grassland. It was at this point we turned up.

Over the next couple of months, the ground was dug by our small family bubble. When the railway sleepers arrived our vegetable garden came into being. A full plot emerged with a fruiting terrace and three pre-loved recycled greenhouses erected. The Sisters at Hyning Monastery provided some vegetable seedlings for growing in the first year, and guided us through sowing seeds for this next season. This year's crop is mainly from seeds.

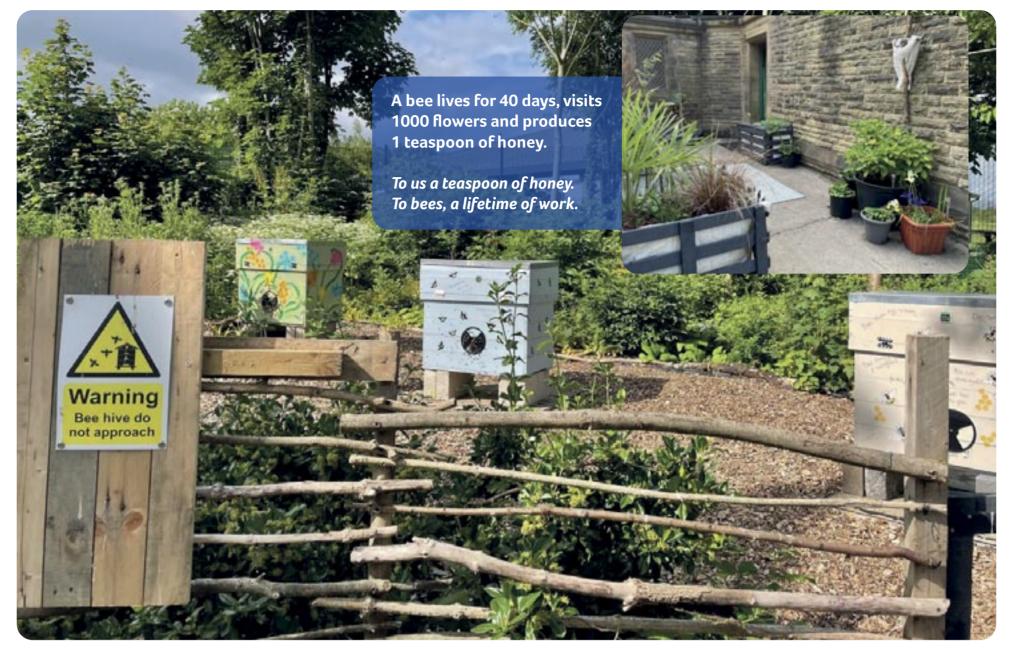
As the church reopened and people returned to the building they were welcomed to a new garden. The space provided a Covid safe meeting space, the large greenhouse became a wellventilated room for a Confessional and Spiritual Direction, through the remaining months of restriction. The fruit and veg produce were offered to

parishioners for donations and excess fruit was made into jams and marmalade. All the raised proceeds helped provide funding for the next year's planning.

Throughout Covid lockdowns 1.0 and 2.0, as the restrictions allowed, the volunteers emerged to help tend our little Eden. It rapidly became a haven to preserve sanity! The space has rapidly become the place for people to meet, to rest, to work and to play, reconnecting with nature and enjoy the outdoor space.

Local builders became aware of the project and continue to donate any excess from their trade from stone to planks! We even have a local lady who supplies pallets, which has been used to build fencing, benches and various planters! A local supplier brings locally sourced peat free compost, and the most important local, our horse poop lady provides her 'donations' on a regular basis! Many of the volunteers and regular donors are not from our regular church community. In fact, most are agnostic or atheist. Through the garden, all feel welcomed, intrigued and love to watch all the 'developments around the back' of the church, leaving a little more curious about 'faith' and what makes 'us Catholics tick'. And as all become more familiar and comfortable with the space, the conversations deepen.

Our community plot borders with our St Joseph's primary school. These children have watched with inquisition and awe as 'the monsters' (pumpkins) grew by the



fence, and classes visit us regularly to see some of God's creation unfold. They and others will undoubtedly continue to visit!

This garden project has linked us in with other local allotment holders. I regularly visit these, and their members come to our St Joes garden too. The links with Hyning Monastery are strong (as I am an oblate there) but also new links are being forged with Nazareth House too! Our garden is on the Hedgehog preservation map, and we have opened Hedgehog highways between us and the school and provided various shelters for wildlife. Our new pond is thriving with tadpoles, and the garden has never seen such a diverse bird population and all their little chicks in quite some time!

At the beginning, as the garden took shape, me and a volunteer prayed for bees and a beekeeper. Little did I know that person being trained would be me! (Note to self- be very careful what you pray for!). So as of today, this latest development has seen us restore one of the Catholic Churches most ancient traditions of 'bee-keeping'. We joined up with The Lune Valley Beekeepers initially for advice to offer space for hives, and then for support and training. And in true traditional sense, the bees have been officially welcomed and blessed using the ancient prayers written by St. Benedict, one of their many patrons!

So, the garden is predominantly an allotment. But since it was apparent that bees were coming, many parishioners

have supplied flowering plants, trees and herbs. Our space developed further offering a 'Snug' (a seated area /perennial flower garden to supply the bees with nectar all year round) and a specific prayer garden courtyard (where people can sit in peace, reflect and pray undisturbed). The space is used as a safe haven by so many. From parishioners who grab a coffee and sit with their children after a weekday Mass, to refugee families who meet up to reconnect.

From a barren land, Covid helped to bore and birth, a living, breathing space for connection. It has soon become a space to find peace, pray and a place to watch the great tapestry that is the wonder of creation unfold. Through the gentle birdsong, the buzz of the bees and the invisible unfolding of new leaves, our Creator connects with humanity; and our mission field expands.

"But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind. — Job 12:7-10 (ESV)



"I can't wait for things to get back to normal" Fr. Stephen Talbutt reflects on Hope.





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"I can't wait for things to get back to normal" seems to be a phrase I'm hearing a lot these days. It does make me question what is *"normal"*.

t has certainly been a very challenging eighteen months since the pandemic hit, it has effected how we live our lives, how we worship, how we school, how we work. These things that we had become accustomed to suddenly seemed to be turned on their heads. Maybe our normal was comfortable in its routine, predictability and dependability.

It could be that we are wanting things to be comfortable again. It strikes me though, that nothing ever remains the same, everything changes all the time, it's just that the pandemic has been a more dramatic change, it's made us stop in our tracks and reassess what we thought of as normal.

Suffering and pain is very much a part of this life, but during this pandemic we have experienced it in a global and for a lot of us in a very personal way. But our trials and uncertainties can bring us closer to God.

St Pauls tells us of a particular trial he undergoes in his second letter to the Corinthians he tells us:

'In order to stop me from getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and stop me from getting too proud! About this thing I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said 'My grace is enough for you; my power is at its best in weakness' 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

God uses Paul's suffering to bring him closer. Indeed, if we let him, God will use our pain, our discomfort, our weakness to bring us closer to him.

In my life I see a lot of people who are sick and in pain, and it's humbling to see how much comfort the sacraments can bring to those who turn to the Lord. When we are at our weakest God's grace is at its strongest. But what is *"Grace"*?

I think of 'grace' as divine help, Gods help both in times of need, and in times of joy.

God's grace can lift us and work through our suffering even when we can't feel it, all we have to do is trust and hope.

I lost my dear mum in September last year during the middle of the pandemic. During the last years of my mum's life she really suffered, her eyesight was failing she had an incurable chest infection and she was riddled with painful arthritis in her hands and especially her legs. It got so bad she could barely hold a pen. But she had a religious colouring book, she used to find it relaxing to colour in the sheets. After she died I was going through her things and I found the book, and the first page I opened was a sheet she coloured in saying just one word, "Hope". (It's the picture at the top of this page).

It was as if she left me a message, 'hope' in the Lord, even in the darkest times in the painful times faith, hope and love are all you need. I've had that sheet framed and I look at it everyday on my prayer table. "Hope". In mum's weakness God's grace worked strongly, she may have struggled but she never lost hope and she never lost faith, the night she died the nursing home let me come in to see her, it was the first time I'd physically been with her since the lockdown started. She put her arms out for a hug, and the first words she said to me were "Have you brought the Sacraments".

Of course I had! It was my privilege and my joy to anoint her for her final journey. Mum never lost hope, not hope in this world, but hope, and trust, and love in God.

Hope was her grace, and that is the grace I pray for every day. Things may never be "normal" again and this doesn't worry me, but I pray that through the abnormal through our pain and uncertainty the Lord will bring us ever closer to him, Amen.

A Cry of Gratitude

St Thérèse of Lisieux provides the Catechism's definition of prayer: 'For me prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and of love, embracing both trial and joy. It's a vast, supernatural force which opens out my heart, and unites me close to Jesus'. Gratitude is one of the hallmarks of Thérèse's spirituality.: 'It is the spirit of gratitude which draws down upon us the overflow of God's grace, for no sooner have we thanked Him for one blessing than He hastens to send us ten additional favours in return. Then when we show gratitude for these gifts, He multiplies His benedictions to such a degree that there seems to be a constant stream of divine grace coming our way. This has been my own personal experience. Try it out for yourself and see. For all that Our Lord is constantly giving me, my gratitude is boundless, and I try to prove it to Him in a thousand different ways' (Celine Martin, My Sister, Thérèse).

Believe in the Power of Prayer

Thérèse had a strong belief in the power of prayer: 'What an extraordinary thing it is, the efficacy of prayer. Like a queen, it has access at all times to the Royal presence and can get whatever it asks for' (Story of a Soul). 'It is only through prayer and sacrifice that we can be useful to the Church'. 'What should I do without prayer and sacrifice? They are all the strength I've got; the irresistible weapons our Lord has granted me. I've proved it again and again - they touch souls much more surely than any words could' (Story of a Soul). Indeed she had sacrificed the life as a missionary that she longed for believing she could be of more use to the Church in the austere cloister of Carmel, seldom seeing the fruit of the little acts she offered up to save souls.

'I tell God what I want quite simply'

Thérèse said it made her head spin to go hunting for beautiful prayers in books. She preferred to use her own words: 'I just do what children have to do before they've learnt to read; I tell God what I want quite simply, without any splendid turns of phrase, and somehow He always manages to understand me' (Story).

Dryness

St Thérèse may be the saint who most reassures us when we are tempted to feel discouraged about our own life of prayer. She is very open and honest about sometimes nodding off in prayer, struggling to fix her mind on the mysteries of the Rosary, and spending most of her prayer life in aridity. In the last 18 months of her life she experienced such an obscuration of her faith that she even doubted whether heaven was real. It is true she had some flashes: - 'transports of love' at 14, she had a vision of Our Lady's smile which cured her of a childhood illness, and she had a premonition of her father's mental incapacitation. In Carmel, after her Oblation to Merciful Love and while making the Stations of the Cross she had an experience of being seized with 'such a violent love for God that I can't explain it except by saying it felt as though I were totally plunged in fire'. But she goes on to

say 'I experienced it only once and for one single instant, falling back immediately into my habitual dryness' (Last Conversations). Notwithstanding this dryness however she kept on praying, believing firmly that she had the power to console Jesus.

'Sometimes when I'm in such a state of spiritual dryness that I can't find a single thought in my mind which will bring me close to God, I say an Our Father and a Hail Mary very slowly indeed. How they take me out of myself then; what solid satisfaction they give me then! Much more than if I'd hurried through them a hundred times over' (Story). Thérèse also loved to make the Stations of the Cross and would have liked to do so every day. She loved to read the Gospels:

'All books left me in aridity and I'm still in that state ... In this helplessness, Holy Scripture and The Imitation of Christ come to my aid; in them I discover a solid and very pure nourishment. But it is especially the Gospels which sustain me during my hours of prayer, for in them I find what is necessary for my poor little soul. I am constantly discovering in them new lights, hidden and mysterious meanings (Story, Ms. A, ch 8).

Our Lady

Thérèse was absolutely devoted to Our Lady. She used to turn to her before Communion, presenting herself in the manner of a little child who had got her hair in a mess and her frock dirtied, and ask her Mother to tidy her up and fix a bow in her hair to make her ready for Jesus. Thérèse writes: [The Virgin Mary always came] 'to my

rescue the moment I ask her to. Any anxiety, any difficulty, makes me turn to her at once, and you couldn't have a more loving Mother to see you through' (Story).

'I just love Him'

Thérèse approached God with a childlike confidence, calling Him '*Le bon Dieu*', treating Him in many ways like her very loveable Papa. We can eavesdrop on snatches of her prayer, noted down by her Sr Agnes in the Last Conversations: '*Oh I love Him. My God I love You!*'

Thérèse's sister Celine cared for her in her last stages of illness. She writes 'I used to try to look in on her several times during the night. Once I found her with her hands joined and her eyes raised to heaven. 'What are you doing?' I asked 'You should try to get some sleep'. 'I cannot' she replied 'for I am suffering too much, so I am praying'. 'And what are you saying to Jesus?' 'I say nothing. I just love Him' (My Sister, Thérèse).

In the latter stages of her illness Thérèse said 'I cannot pray. I can only look at the Blessed Virgin and say 'Jesus'. One might feel on reading this however, 'but she is praying!'

Little Way

Thérèse's main legacy to us is her Little Way. Just as her namesake St Teresa said it was the virtues that prepare for prayer, so Thérèse devotes most of her teaching to her Little Way of offering up acts of love, humility and service, in childlike trust to please Jesus.



Her doctrine is the fruit of her prayer, taught to her from the Gospels, by that Loving Master, at whose feet she faithfully sat, even though she had not the consolation of feeling any fervour in 'return' for the time spent. 'Our love for Jesus is truly great when we do not feel its sweetness. It then becomes a martyrdom... When, on the contrary, we begin to seek ourselves, true love dies away. Unfortunately, many serve Jesus when He consoles them, but few are willing to keep Him company when He is asleep.' © Dolgellau Carmel. All rights reserved. The Dolgellau Sisters are running a zoom weekend for single Catholic women discerning a vocation to religious life: 'Following in the footsteps of St Teresa of Jesus under the Guidance of St Joseph' on 8-10 October. For more resources on prayer or to book please visit our new website: www.carmel-dolgellau-uk





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Rev. John Bell To the casual reader, humour in the Bible can be totally lost, mostly because we have a habit, when reading privately, of hearing the dullest lector or priest reading the verses in a monotone. But the humour is there, in the Old Testament and in the New for those who have ears to hear. This retreat will start on Friday 19 November at 7 pm and end on Sunday 21 November at 2 pm Suggested donation: £175

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This retreat will explore how the practice of meditation can be encountered through the language of the body. Using breathing exercises, gentle stretching and slow Tai Chi movements along with seated meditation periods, the weekend will be nourishing for mind, body and spirit. This retreat starts on Friday 22 October at 7:00pm and ends on Sunday 24 October at 2:00pm.

This retreat is led by Terry Doyle.

For information and bookings visit www.minsteracres.org, Minsteracres Retreat Centre, nr. Consett, County Durham, DH8 9RT 01434 673248

Greg Watts reports on the change of name for the Apostleship of the Sea and how the charity has coped during the global pandemic.

Sea Sunday fell on 11th July and was a special time for Stella Maris (formerly called Apostleship of the Sea), the official maritime welfare agency of the Catholic Church. This is the day every year when the church celebrates and prays for all those who live and work at sea.

As a global maritime charity, Stella Maris has been playing a crucial role in supporting seafarers and fishers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is continuing to offer spiritual and practical help to those most in need.

It has been well-documented how India has been struggling with a devastating second wave of coronavirus. Thousands have been dying on the streets as hospitals there find themselves running out of oxygen. Now, though, more than 1,000 Indian seafarers' families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic will benefit from support in the port of Cochin.

Through Stella Maris's involvement, 10 oxygenators are being purchased. This will prevent an estimated 60 lives a month being lost to the virus, amid a drastic shortage of oxygen tanks in hospitals.

With the charity's and its donors' support, 1100 food parcels are also being purchased and distributed to seafarers' families in Cochin devastated by COVID-19. Each parcel is sufficient to feed a family of five for one month. Pandemic precautions in the United Kingdom have also led to the charity adopting different approaches to its work with seafarers and fishers around the UK.

For example, Stella Maris chaplains have delivered welfare packages to vessels' gangways or via rope links to ships (see photo) to maintain social distancing protocols. These packages comprise essentials such as PPE equipment, clothing, toiletries and foodstuffs. Seafarers have expressed their gratitude for being able to stay in touch with their families, through Stella Maris' provision of internet access in ports thanks to Wi-Fi Units.

When this has not been possible, topup cards for mobile phones have been provided to seafarers by the charity. These have been invaluable to seafarers. Captain Flover Santos, the Master of a tanker, expressed his thanks, when Stella Maris in Tees port provided top-up cards to the crew who were not allowed to leave their ship to go ashore at any of the ports



at which they were calling. "You help us to connect with our families. You guys are truly friends, and an instrument of God," he said.

Seafarers need help now more than ever. A survey Stella Maris conducted found that 69% of seafarers suffered significant financial impact during the pandemic. Almost half said they support three or more people with their income, and their top concern was feeding their families. Financial worries like these and the stress that thousands face from having to spend more than a year on board due to extended contracts or, on the other hand, not having any work at all, has had a negative effect on their mental, emotional, and psychological wellbeing. Adrian Gannon, Director of Development at Stella Maris said: "On Sea Sunday this year, we thanked God for the seafarers and fishers who have kept food and medical supplies moving during the pandemic and for the sacrifices they have made over the last year to supply our provisions. We will pray to Our Lady, Star of the Sea, to protect them in harsh conditions at sea and from coronavirus.

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"We respectfully appeal to readers to support our ministry with fishers and seafarers at this critical time by praying for them and kindly making a donation to support our work through our website: www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate We will be especially grateful for any support you can kindly provide."

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