

FREE

The Catholic



VOICE *of Lancaster*

**The Official Newspaper to
the Diocese of Lancaster**

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INSIDE: pg11

**Diocesan Pilgrimage
to Ladyewell**



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Mrs Frances Wygladala retired as headteacher of St Kentigern's Primary School in Blackpool at the end of the summer term with a thanksgiving Mass. She had been headteacher there for 25 years of her 35 years in education.

Longest Serving Headteacher Retires

Mrs Wygladala said "I have enjoyed the opportunities and challenges that the role has brought, serving the community through some key periods – setting up the unitary authority in Blackpool in 1998, the centenary of the school in 2004, Covid in 2020 and the recent journey to academisation, joining the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust in 2022. Staff, families, parishioners, clergy, governors and children have supported and enhanced our caring Catholic ethos, with the highlight in 2021 achieving Outstanding in all areas in our Section 48 Diocesan Inspection. I am grateful to the staff for all their hard work, focusing on the needs of all our children and families, going above and beyond with Christ at the centre, parents for their continued loyal support and the Governing Body for giving me the opportunity to lead such an amazing school."

And she had a special message for the children "It has been an honour and privilege to serve you as your headteacher – my favourite part of the day after morning briefing and prayers with the staff, was to greet the children and parents on the drive, to see the smiling faces of the children, full of joy and enthusiasm, ready to engage with all the learning opportunities of a new day. This always boosted me and enabled me to face anything and everything the day had to offer. Keep up the good work and I'll miss you. Never forget how special you are and what a difference you make to others."

Mrs Wygladala is now looking forward to working for the diocese as a part time adviser on governance and leadership and also working with the schools in BEBCMAT on Catholic Life throughout the Trust as well as spending time at home with her family and taking their dog for long walks.

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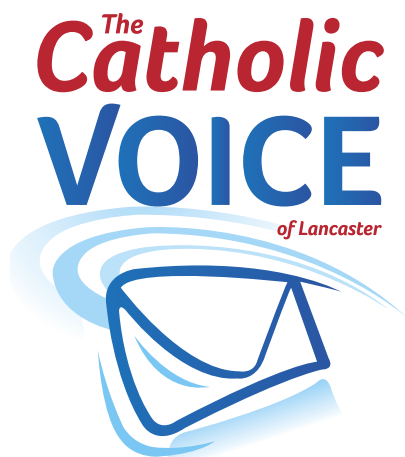
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'The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others...'

Service comes in many forms and for schools, Governors play an essential role, supporting leadership teams.

On Tuesday, 25th July, the feast of St James, at Our Lady of the Assumption in Blackpool, the service of four retiring Governors was celebrated. A Mass of thanksgiving was held followed by a reception which brought together a loving community. Canon Chris Loughran presided, supported by former parish priest, Fr James Burns. During his homily Canon Chris praised the humble service of these special ladies and thanked them for their dedication and commitment in volunteering as governors for so many years.

Afterwards, former colleagues and friends shared a reception together in the Parish Hall to celebrate the service given to the school and the community.

Anne Davies, of the social committee prepared a beautiful buffet which was enjoyed by all.

Between them, these four wonderful ladies have served the community for over one hundred years.

Mrs Jacqui Hickey and Mrs Angela Amatiello as Foundation Governors, Mrs Marian Howcroft as Vice Chair and Mrs Eileen Guerin as Chair of Governors (who alone has served for over 45 years).

We give thanks to God for the service of these wonderful woman and pray that others will continue to follow in their footsteps to support our Catholic schools.

Jan Hornby

Photos above:

Left – All four ladies with Canon Chris: From left to right as viewing, Angela Amatiello, Jacqui Hickey, Eileen Guerin (in front cutting cake) and Marian Howcroft.

Top right – Eileen Guerin with husband Brian (Eileen served as chair for over 45 years).

Bottom right – Anne Davies (Church social committee) and Marian Howcroft.



Blackpool Teaching Hospital Maternity Staff Celebrate 75 years of the NHS

Eileen Shaw of Our Lady of the Assumption parish in Blackpool and a midwife for 50 years attended with three of her colleagues a special NHS 75th birthday celebration in Westminster Abbey in July.

A group of four colleagues from Blackpool Teaching Hospital's maternity services attended a special service at Westminster Abbey to mark the 75th birthday of the NHS.

On Wednesday, 5 July across the country organisations, charities, and communities joined forces to celebrate the big day.

While Blackpool Teaching Hospitals hosted a series of events and initiatives close to home for colleagues and patients, four outstanding colleagues were nominated to attend a special service in London.

NHS England along with special guests held a multi-faith service for NHS staff, volunteers and partners at Westminster Abbey. From Blackpool Teaching hospitals four colleagues from the Trust's maternity services were nominated to attend to represent the organisation.

Two of those attending, Laura Walsh, Swan Bereavement Midwife and Eileen Shaw, long-serving Midwife of 50 years, earlier this year were winners in the Trust's staff awards as they were recognised for their services to the NHS.

Eileen, who received the Trust's Lifetime Achievement award invited her colleague Julia Thompson, a Sister Midwife.

Laura, who received the Compassion in Action award was accompanied by Lucy Brockill, Swan Bereavement Support Worker.

The service was conducted by The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle MBE, Dean of Westminster and saw a series of speakers throughout the event which was also attended by Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak who also gave a presentation.

Laura Walsh said:

"I feel very honoured to have been chosen to represent the Trust at the NHS 75th anniversary service. The day was wonderful and emotional for us all."

"We stood proud in our uniforms, sharing stories of the wonderful work we witness everyday at Blackpool, the inspirational colleagues we are lucky to work alongside and the patients and families we are blessed to meet."

"It was clear the NHS means so much to everyone and there seemed to be a rekindled realisation that it must be protected and prioritised."

Lucy and Julia echoed these comments adding how proud they were and what an amazing experience it was. Lucy, who has worked for the Trust for 16 years, added that this has been one of the highlights of her career so far.

The service, which lasted an hour-and-a-half, brought together hundreds of NHS workers and volunteers from across the country.

Eileen, who has seen the development of the NHS first-hand over her career, spoke with pride about Blackpool and used the service as an opportunity to reflect:

"The day was perfect in every way, we met so many interesting people and spoke with our colleagues from across the country who share our passion."

"The service was beautiful, the music and choir brought tears to my eyes. Listening to each person's testimony made me feel privileged to have worked in a small way for the NHS. I am truly grateful for this day."

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YOUTH MATTERS

As I write this, it's August 31st. The last day in the academic year and the precipice of the next. Children born after midnight tonight will do their GCSEs in the summer of 2039 and will graduate from university in the summer of 2042 – unless they do an internship at Castlerigg before Uni of course, in which case, 2043. But the point is well made – time marches on!

One thing we like to do at Castlerigg is keep things fresh. Whenever people come back to Castlerigg, we want them to see things that have changed. People coming this September will see a much nicer building, a redeveloped games room (we've finally taken a sledgehammer to the knackered old pool table and table football – literally – and replaced them with a lovely new air hockey table), redeveloped small group rooms and a massively enhanced programme. We have also revamped our open retreats and it's these that we want to focus on in this edition. What's coming up in the year ahead...

CATHSOC RETREAT // NOVEMBER 3-5

This is a brand new venture for this year and we are very excited about it! During the first weekend in November, we will be running a retreat for Catholic students. There will be a minimal programme: a few talks, Mass of course, and a lot of social activities. Because students are usually skint, we are keeping the price down to just £25.

ADVENT RETREAT // DECEMBER 8-10

We have changed our general open retreats slightly this year (by which we

mean the retreats that aren't targeted at a specific group like students or altar servers) in a few key ways. Firstly, they are now open to anyone in Year 7 or above. Secondly, there are going to be three of them.

The first general open retreat is the Advent retreat and it's open to anyone in Year 7 or above, up to age 25. That means that anyone who is interested in deepening their faith can come. You don't have to go to a Catholic school, you don't have to have been to Castlerigg before, and you don't need to live in the diocese.

The Advent retreat is a chance to make some new friends, have some fun, and journey together through Advent.

The cost for the Advent Retreat is £65, but we don't want that to put anybody off. If you want to come but can't afford it, please get in touch.

There is more information in the website.

ALTAR SERVERS RETREAT // JANUARY 12-13

Back by popular demand, our annual retreat for Altar Servers is happening this January. It's a one night retreat, ending on Saturday so that attendees can be back in their parishes, and on the altar, for Sunday Mass!

The retreat is open to servers in Year 5 or above and costs just £35pp. As above, we don't want the cost to be prohibitive, so get in touch if you can't quite stretch to that.

Bookings aren't open just yet, but they will be soon.

EASTER RETREAT // MARCH 28-31

The Easter Retreat is our oldest open retreat at Castlerigg and literally thousands of people have taken part over the years.

The retreat starts on Holy Thursday and those taking part journey together through the key liturgies of the Triduum to Easter Sunday. Yes, there is a lot of praying involved, but it's not just about time in the Chapel, important and awesome though that may be! There are socials, talks, trips out and a few other things besides.

Like the Advent Retreat, it's now open to anyone in Year 7 or above whether you're from the diocese, or you've been to Castlerigg before, or not.

Bookings will open in the new year. Check our website and socials for more details.

SUMMER RETREAT // May 24-26

The Summer Retreat is the new kid on the block. Our newest general open retreat will hopefully complement the Advent and Easter Retreats by giving people who have been to Castlerigg a chance to come back and take the experience that little bit deeper.

Like those retreats though, it's not restricted to those who have been before.

It's in May, and bookings will likely open in the Spring.

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING?

NEW YEAR, NEW TEAM

At the end of last year we said goodbye to a few people, as is the nature of residential retreat centres. During August, we welcomed in some awesome new people. Specifically, Melissa, Beth, Veva, Felix, and Veronica. We are also delighted to welcome our new Chaplain, Fr Ajish. Fr Ajish will be based in Ambleside, ministering to the people of that parish and Windermere parish, but he will also be spending a lot of time at Castlerigg. If you come on retreat this year, you'll almost certainly meet him.

CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY INTERNSHIPS

On the subject of our team, we still have space and we are basically now operating rolling recruitment with scope for people to start at different points during the year.

Our Youth Ministry Internship programme is a brand new development to replace our gap year programme. The idea is to give volunteers enhanced training and experience. There is loads of information on our website. Alternatively, anyone interested is welcome to give us a call or pop up for a visit.

SPONSOR A YOUTH MINISTER

If you want to support one of the lovely people we've just told you about, then we also have a new thing for that! Yes, we are giving people the chance to sponsor one of our team. Again, there is loads of information on our website. *Jack Regan*

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Bishop Paul invested as a member of The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

The summer investiture for The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem was held at the Cathedral Church of St John the Baptist in Norwich on the 16th/17th June 2023. Over 100 Knights and Dames, along with their friends and families, gathered for this special occasion.

The Lieutenancy was given a warm welcome to Norwich by the Bishop of East Anglia, Peter Collins KC*HS. The Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy, Archbishop John Wilson KC*HS presided over the investiture of Bishop Paul into the Order.

Members from the Northern Section showed their support for Bishop Paul and extended a heartfelt welcome to him as a new member of the Order.

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem consists of practising Catholics dedicated to living a faith-filled life, with a particular focus on the Holy Land. They stand in solidarity with the Church in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, supporting

its material, moral, and spiritual needs. The members of the Order are part of the 'extended family' of the Latin Patriarchate. Prayers, presence and financial assistance are a means of rendering support to it. Prayer is at the core of the service of Knights and Dames, who are committed to daily prayers for each other and for their fellow Christian brothers and sisters.

As an organisation with an explicit mission given by the Pope and administered by the Grand Master and Governor General, the Order operates in local structures across continents. In England & Wales, the Lieutenancy is organized into eight sections, with the Northern Section covering the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford & Shrewsbury.

You can find more information about the Order at www.eohsj.org.uk or contact the Northern President, John Lord KCHS at northernpresident@eohsj.org.uk

Your Letters

Send us your letters:

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- 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,

One cannot read *The Catholic Voice* without noticing the number of articles that relate to the activities being undertaken in the Diocese by the young members of our communities, from toddlers to teenagers.

The Keswick Convention, Helpers at Lourdes, presentations at The Palace, and the “big bash” in Lisbon, (attended by the Pope himself) and numerous other activities and projects.

Whilst many of these are recorded by the Catholic press, very little are seen as news

worthy by the mainstream media. I do not remember North West Tonight running an article on the Keswick Convention, and the national news coverage about the thousands of youngsters from all over the world in Lisbon amounted to about twenty seconds or so and that was probably because Pope Francis went there!

Given how much time and effort our young people put into their projects, demonstrating both their love and respect for their religion, the natural world and the plight of those far less fortunate, I for one would like to see a concerted effort by the Press Office at Lancaster (I presume we have one) to

bring to a wider audience what our young parishioners are up to. They deserve county, area and national recognition.

Perhaps I could close by saying also, how good it is to see so many young parents and their children attending mass.

True, the little ones do make themselves heard, but hey- who cares; they are the future generation and hopefully like the older children today, they will take their place when the time comes in carrying on the wonderful work our youngsters are doing.

Regards Chris Crocker, Ansdell

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Cathedral – a never ending work!



“It’s a bit like painting the Forth Bridge” is an expression often used to describe a task that seemingly never ends and it’s certainly an apt description of maintaining the Cathedral building. No sooner is one significant repair dealt with than another is added to the list.

Being a listed building means all substantial works undertaken must be scrutinized and approved by the Historic Churches Commission, both in terms of design and of materials used and there is often a quite lengthy process that must be completed before the work itself can begin. In recent years we have carried out urgent works on the tower pinnacles, fire alarm system and emergency lighting so in 2022 we turned our attention to the internal walls where there were areas of peeling paintwork. Occasionally it was more than paint that fell from on high, with pieces of plaster dropping down as well!

Having raised the necessary funding and obtained permissions, on 17th April the Cathedral doors remained closed to the public Monday to Friday as work began. Anything that could be removed from the sanctuary area was stored elsewhere. The sanctuary floor was covered with wood and fixed structures like the altar, ambo and cathedra were encased in wooden protective coverings. Creating a scaffolding structure that reaches to the highest levels of a building like the Cathedral is no easy task so it was several days before the decorators, Bernard Watson from Preston, were able to scale the scaffolding around the sanctuary and begin the work of removing the existing paint surface on the walls ready for the new finish to be applied. Having worked with Watson’s previously we knew we were in good hands and careful stripping of the walls began. Then something unexpected happened...

As work to remove the top surface of

paint on the plaster area above the sanctuary progressed, some old artwork began appearing. Working carefully over several days, Clare Watson and her team uncovered the long-hidden artwork. Clare traced out the images and made photographic records. A considerable amount of the decoration was uncovered. Though some was in understandably poor condition, sufficient remained to be able to form a strong impression of the work as a whole.

A shield bearing the crossed keys of St Peter, garlands of foliage and a band around the archway with lettering that began with the words TU ES PETRUS was an exciting find and a decision had to be made quickly about whether we should take steps to recreate the artwork or simply paint over it again. The section of scaffolding in place would need to be moved further up the nave area for the second phase of the work so whatever was decided would need to be actioned

within two or three days. Rob Harrington, our architect, sought the views of members of the Historic Churches Commission and supplied them with images. The response was supportive and the decision was taken to recreate the artwork.

While the process of recreating the stencil work continued, efforts were made to try to establish its age. Sadly, a search through old photographs didn’t provide any definitive proof of the date of the work, or when and why it was covered over. However, one photograph apparently dated prior to 1909 did show some of the details recently uncovered.

In his history of St Peter’s written in 1909 Canon Billington says ‘The church so built and opened for worship was somewhat bare, but has in the course of fifty years received abundant enrichment’. Although we can’t be certain, it is possible that the artwork was part of the ‘enrichment’

Photographs courtesy of Clare Watson.



spoken of by Canon Billington, which would date it between 1859 and 1909.

During the hottest weeks of the year Clare and her team worked diligently at the top of the scaffolding. The nave walls, together with the arcading that runs the length of the nave, were stripped back and repainted. While this planned redecoration was taking place, work continued on reinstating the newly uncovered decoration. Even from ground level, with views blocked by intricate scaffolding, it was clear that the work was going to enhance the Cathedral and justified the decision to recreate something that had been lost. As the first section of scaffolding was dismantled, the full beauty and impact of the artwork was revealed. As we head towards the Diocesan centenary celebrations, it is pleasing to think that we can once again see something that might very well have been in place at the time of the creation of the Diocese of Lancaster.

We are very grateful to those parishioners who donated funds which enabled us to undertake this unplanned addition to the recent work. We are also grateful to Clare Watson and her team who, as ever, have produced work of excellent quality.

This first phase of the redecoration work only involved the nave but the side aisle walls are also in need of attention when finance becomes available. We already know that the second phase holds the prospect of further discoveries. While waiting for changes in scaffolding construction Watsons offered to tidy up an area of wall at the front of one side aisle where there had been some water damage. In stripping off the plain paint surface immediately above one of the consecration candle holders, a section of gold stencil work came to light! Given its position it seems possible that this motif might be repeated above each of the candle positions and the building may have further secrets to uncover. *Joan Fox*



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AT THE END OF EACH DAY HAVE I BECOME A MORE LOVING PERSON

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I met John Wilkins in Rome, celebrating the Feast of St Bede. I knew him by name, as editor of *The Tablet*. We soon discovered that we shared a passion for birds. So, two days later, we went to the Villa Ada, Rome's loveliest park, to listen to nightingales sing. Unforgettable! Thank you, St Bede, for thoughtfully dying in May, the month of months for birdsong.

Our Lord invited us to 'look at the birds of the air' (Mt 6.26), and Christians over the centuries have accepted his invitation. Helen Waddell's delightful *Beasts and Saints* translates many of the medieval stories: St Columba bidding one of his brothers to care for a weary 'pilgrim guest', a migrating crane; St Malo hosting a nesting wren in his cloak, St Kevin, a nesting blackbird in his cupped hand; St Werburga restoring to life a wild goose; St Bartholomew on Farne Island being summoned by a seaduck to rescue her duckling.

In the sixteenth century, Michael Drayton described 'all feathered things yet ever known to men,' From the huge roc unto the little wren's entering Noah's Ark. Three centuries later, Gerard Manley Hopkins, was reminded of Christ by the power and beauty of a hovering kestrel. In June, I was blessed to spend a week at a meeting at [in] Mondaye, a Norbertine Abbey near Bayeux. The community of canons care for their land so well that it is a haven of birdlife: clouds of swallows, swifts and martins, rarer in the surrounding farmland, circled the evening skies. Our own community at Boarbank Hall in Cumbria

will be restarting next spring our annual 'retreats' for birdwatchers, entitled 'Two Wings and Some Prayers'.

We share enough with birds to sense our kinship with them. They too live in a visual, daytime, world, respond to colour, communicate through song. They too build homes, guard territories, bond in pairs, protect and nurture their young. Yet we can only marvel as envious outsiders while they soar, flap, hover, twist, roll and dive through the air. Moreover, the birds themselves are vastly different one from another: pelicans, parakeets and puffins; hawfinches, herons and hummingbirds; kingfishers, kittiwakes and kites.

As the birdsong that was loud in May quietens into autumn, the Church begins to celebrate Creationtide. This ecumenical season starts on 1st September, the first day of the Orthodox ecclesial year, embraces the time of harvest festivals, and concludes on 4th October, the Feast of St Francis, Patron Saint of ecology. We are invited to reflect on the myriad of creatures that share the life of our planet, in the light of our faith in God, Creator of all that exists.

Birds can help us with this precisely because they are both like and unlike us. They are like us enough to reveal their kinship as fellow-creatures of a loving God. They are unlike us enough to remind us that the Creator's activity is not limited by our categories. When we pause to admire creatures that are beautiful in ways beyond ours, we pay homage to a Maker far greater than our imagination.

Sparrowhawks and spoonbills are marvellous not because they are almost human, but because, in their very difference, they point to something and Someone incomparably vaster than our little minds. A thrush's song echoing through a wood speaks to us of a larger world, one of which we are not the centre.

To believe that the world is created is to see it as a gift of love.

When we give thanks for the delicacy of a goldcrest, we go beyond gratitude for what is our own to a wider praise of the 'Maker of all things visible'. When we wonder at the nest of a weaver bird, we expand our sense of the Wisdom 'through whom all things were made'. When we rejoice at the exuberant song of the mounting skylark, we enrich our understanding of 'the Lord, the giver of Life.' For God was not made in the image of Man. As human beings, on the other hand, to be made in the image of God is to find our joy in so much more than what is merely human. Nothing that is God's is alien to us.

The Season of Creation gives us space to grieve for the harm to our common home, to repent, to make new resolutions. As Christians, however, we must begin with gratitude, wonder and joy for a world that is, to paraphrase St Paul, immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine. *Sr. Margaret Atkins*

For more information about residential events at Boarbank see: www.boarbankhall.org.uk
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Diocesan Pilgrimage to Ladyewell

On Saturday 2nd September, 2023 people from around the Diocese and beyond gathered with our Bishop to begin the annual pilgrimage to Ladyewell. Holy Mass took place in St. Mary's, Fernyhalgh, which had been especially decorated, prior to the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to Ladyewell for Benediction.

A large number of altar servers from around the Diocese had also gathered to serve and walk in the procession down the country lanes to Ladyewell. Also

taking part were priests, religious sisters and children assisting with the strewing of petals and ringing bells in front of the Blessed Sacrament, the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and parishioners from parishes near and far. Frank McGrath led us in the Holy Rosary

Following the conclusion of Benediction Scouts from 8th Fulwood Scout Group (Our Lady and St. Edward's, Preston) prepared a superb barbeque for the Altar Servers. It was a lovely opportunity for Altar Servers from around the Diocese to

meet socially and make new contacts and friendships.

Many thanks are due to the help and support of Fathers Augustine and Francisco of St. Mary's and the Shrine, who both experienced their first Diocesan Pilgrimage and to Sue Gornall and the volunteers at Ladyewell. The weather was top drawer when all had gathered to honour Our Lord and Our Lady in such a special way at St. Mary's and Ladyewell. What a treasure we have in our Diocese.

Ian Mulholland

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Campaigners from the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) completed their 'Darkness to Light' Peace Prayer Pilgrimage in Grange-over-Sands in September having spent four days walking from Barrow-in-Furness along the Cumbrian Cistercian Way.

On route they had conducted an act of lament which highlighted the indiscriminate destruction and suffering that would inevitably result from the use of nuclear weapons, including the UK's Trident system.

And they held multi-faith events at venues including Furness Abbey, Holy Trinity Church Bardsea, Conishead Priory, Ulverston Meeting House and Cartmel Priory. In Grange they were met by Father Philip Smith, who led their final prayer service, including a commitment to end the scourge of nuclear weapons.

Philip Gilligan / Cumbria & Lancs CND



In the footsteps of the Lancaster Martyrs –for Dolgellau Carmel

Sixteen people gathered for the inaugural 'Walk for Dolgellau Carmel' drawn mainly from St Joseph's Skerton, Lancaster but also including a guest from Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Church in Caton.

The walk was to raise money for the Carmelite Sisters of Dolgellau in Wales. We know them because a previous parishioner of St Joseph's joined them in 2017. Like everyone else, the Sisters are faced with a 'cost of living' crisis and therefore to show our appreciation of their vocation, witness and prayers this fundraiser was arranged for them.

Our prayers along the way were taken from "Like a Deer Yearning for Running Streams" a book edited by Fr Philip Conner, which outlines a Lancaster

Martyrs walk and prayers from the time. The walk took place on St Bonaventure's feast day and the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of Carmel and began with Mass celebrated by Fr John-Paul Evans. St Joseph's church has a shrine to the Martyrs which includes an icon written by Martin Earle of Shrewsbury. After Mass and before we set off on the walk we gathered at the front of the church for prayer.

"Almighty, ever living God, by whose gift the Lancaster Martyrs fought for righteousness's sake even until death, grant, we pray, through their intercession, that we may bear every adversity for the sake of your love and hasten with all our strength towards you who alone are life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Emmanuel and Amy Gadoud



St Mary's Way – a sponsored walk in aid of the poor in Rwanda

Two of the trustees from the local catholic charity, the Rwanda Group Trust, have walked the 6 day, 67 mile route from St Peter's Cathedral Lancaster to the Shrine of Our Lady at St Mary's church Cleator, Cumbria. The walk was devised in 2018 by the Robinson family of Cleator.

Mark Ibison and Michael Donlan scheduled their walk to arrive at the shrine to coincide with the Lancaster Diocesan pilgrimage Holy Mass there at on 10th September.

Day 1 took them from the cathedral to Bolton-le-Sands, through Carnforth, Silverdale and on to Arncliffe. By chance they arrived at Our Lady of Lourdes in time to join parishioners who were attending Adoration as they said the rosary. A lovely fitting end to the first day!

Day 2 was started from Grange-over-Sands after crossing the Leven estuary. They continued over Hampsfell Hospice, visited Cartmel priory church and finished the day at Newby Bridge.

Day 3 was a beautiful sunny day and became a real joy following the side of

Lake Windermere to Skelwith Bridge.

Day 4 started grey and damp and only got worse with heavy rain as they walked up Langdale and climbed Stake Pass to Stonethwaite in Borrowdale.

Days 5 & 6 would see them continue over Honister and Blacksail passes along the full length of Ennerdale and arriving at St Mary's Cleator for 3pm as planned.

They would be very grateful if you would feel able to sponsor them for this pilgrim walk. The Rwanda Group Trust is a small registered charity with no overheads where every penny goes directly to the poorest of the poor in Rwanda through the Catholic parishes they work with.

There is much more information on their website www.rwandagrouptrust.org where there is a link to a Just Giving page as well as other ways to donate. Donations can also be made by contacting Michael Donlan, Rwanda Group Trust, 17 Mayfield Road, Preston PR2 1EX Tel: 07864990941.

For more information about St Mary's Way see: www.stmarysandstjosephs.com



Phoebe finally crowned Rose Queen – A mum's diary ...

2020 – a year we had all been looking forward to, as Phoebe had been selected to be crowned as Lytham's Rose Queen in June. But then in March we were told to stay home for a period of time no-one knew the length of.

A week before we'd held a Lytham Club Day meeting and it was decided that this year there would be no Club Day. The first time since the Second World War. Phoebe cried, but gracefully told the committee that she understood why. A week later the decision was taken out of our hands with a national no, global lockdown and Phoebe wouldn't be crowned Lytham Rose Queen in 2021 either.

A year to take stock. To pray. To re-evaluate what was really important. To re-focus. We looked forward with hope. Then in April 2021, Phoebe was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma (*primary bone cancer*) in her right leg. The next 8 months involved punishing rounds of chemotherapy, surgery to remove the tumour and replace her knee and upper tibia with a titanium implant, and intensive physiotherapy. Phoebe never questioned why it had happened to her, but she did tell me one night while we lay together on her bed listening to the low pumping sound of the hospital machines administering chemo, that if her having cancer meant that it saved someone else, she would take the hit.

It was clear that in January 2022, as Phoebe was nearing the end of her treatment that she would not be in the position to be Rose Queen – despite the committee's plans to put on Lytham Club Day that year. Her mobility was still quite poor – despite making great progress in physio. But there was also the physical changes 6 rounds of chemo had caused Phoebe. Luckily, St. Cuthbert's Church, Lytham had a girl who was willing to step in. Beatrice Smith was crowned Lytham

Rose Queen 2022 and she was wonderful.

Phoebe continued to rehabilitate that year, and in June she was signed off as she had reached her potential. She could walk with barely a limp and was enjoying life to the full again. Subsequent scan and checks came back all clear and so, in October 2022 we started to look forward to and plan her crowning for 2023 – 92 years after her great-grandma Catherine "Kitty" Brown had been crowned as St. Peter's Rose Queen. What a legacy!

The girls who had originally been chosen to be in Phoebe's retinue 3 years previous, said they would love to support her again with the addition of Phoebe's best friend, Grace Cox from St. Joseph's, Ansdell. Much fundraising commenced and the ongoing love, prayers and support of the parish and the local community meant that Phoebe and her retinue could have exactly the day they envisaged.

Saturday 24th June 2023. Phoebe, Emilia (*Chief Maid*), Grace (*Cushion Bearer*), Train Bearers Freya, Layla, Lilly and Mabel and White Maids Grace and Elsie, left St. Peter's Church to the joyous ringing of the bells to process around Lytham in the brilliant sunshine. Their day had finally come and the reception from the whole town filled us with happiness. They were proud to be representing their parish.

After the parade came the crowning at Lytham Hall. Phoebe was honoured to be crowned by the Lytham Rose Queen from 1953, 70 years before, in the same year of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. The sun shone throughout the day and our prayers had been answered. Phoebe's day was an inspiration of fight and faith, and God was very much with us all in Lytham on that day.

Gemma Rowlings

Photos by Lauryn Eliza Photography.



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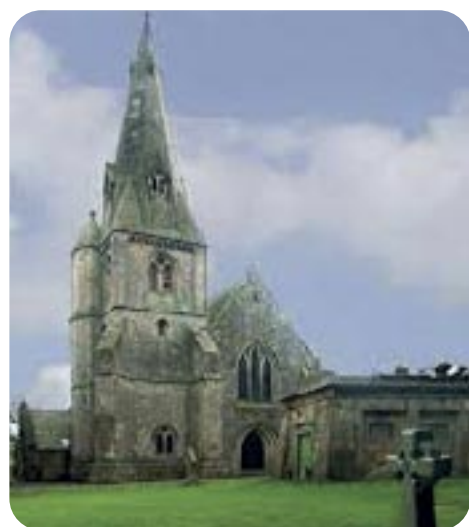


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175 Years at Thurnham

The 175th anniversary of the consecration of SS Thomas and Elizabeth church at Thurnham was celebrated in August with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Paul with concelebrants Fr Peter Sayer, Fr Peter Foulkes and Fr David Branford. Fr David Branford preached the homily which is reproduced here.



As a deacon I was present at the centenary Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Thornton. There was one parishioner, aged 103 who had been a small child at the opening of the church. There will, of course, be nobody here this evening who would have been present at the consecration of St Thomas and St Elizabeth Thurnham in 1848 but it just possible that there might be some one here amongst our more venerable faithful who might, as a small child, have met a very elderly parishioner who was present on that occasion. If not, we have no living link to that day in 1848. The chances would, I suppose, be slim. Life expectancy in the mid-nineteenth century was 40 for a man and 42 for a woman though these figures were heavily skewed by shocking rates of infant mortality but even when that is taken into account, the average age at death was 57.

The year 1848 was one of considerable political turmoil around the world and is known in the history books as the year of revolutions. The old order was changing. There were revolutions in France, in Germany, in Hungary and in Brazil. The terrible famine in Ireland which had begun in 1845 was still bringing suffering and hardship to the people of that land, many of whom would find their way to England bolstering Catholic numbers here. The most significant development in this country in 1848 was the passing of the Public Health Act. Health care was extremely patchy and sanitation was still

very primitive. I am not quite sure how things were measured in those days but the people of Lancashire were apparently producing one million tons of sewage each year and the lack of proper systems to address this was clearly having an adverse effect on public health.

Closer to home, the inelegantly named Lancaster Lunatic Asylum underwent an inspection by two doctors who rejoiced in the title of lunacy commissioners. They seemed generally satisfied with what they found and thought that the staff there were doing a good job 'despite patients coming from a county not noted either for the suavity or gentleness of its populace and despite admitting a number of criminal patients.' The word 'patient' seems to have been interchangeable with the word 'inmate' as the report records that there were 765 inmates. Those held in the asylum were divided into three categories, idiots, imbeciles and the insane. For those of us who are tempted to look back at the past through rose-tinted spectacles, it is a reminder that whereas not all new developments feel like progress we have come a long way in some areas of life.

Just eight days before the consecration of this church, there was an incident which is likely to have been the talk of the good people of Thurnham. On 21st August 1848, a northbound Euston to Glasgow express crashed into the back of a local train which had stopped at Bay Horse station, a rural station five miles south of Lancaster. One woman was killed and twenty passengers were injured. The 18 months old child of the woman who died was thrown from the window and recovered with barely a scratch. It seems perfectly possible that there may have been a survivor of that crash present at the consecration of this church.

If 1848 was a year of ferment in the world, there was also much going on within the Church in this country. Some 19 years earlier, in 1829, the Roman Catholic Relief Act, otherwise known as the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed. The legislation itself was born out of pragmatism rather than any deeply felt conviction on the part of the establishment that Catholics had been the victims of prejudice and injustice. The reality was without this Act Ireland would have been ungovernable and it was not possible to make concessions to Catholics in one part of the kingdom and not in another. Within ten years of the Emancipation Act, Rome began to look at the governance of the Catholic Church in England which since 1688 had been divided into four vicariates or districts with a bishop over each. The proposal was that the number of Vicars Apostolic should be increased to eight and this change took place in 1840 and this was the situation which pertained the church here was consecrated.

Alongside this growing confidence within the Catholic community, there was a stirring within the Church of England which came to be known as the Oxford movement: its origin is usually dated to a sermon given by John Keble

in the University Church in 1833. This movement sought, amongst other things to demonstrate that the Church of England was a true heir and successor of the early church. If Keble was the catalyst of the movement and Pusey the austere professor of Hebrew who would remain true to the principles of the movement until his death, the shining light of the movement was John Henry Newman. Little by little, Newman moved along a path that drew him closer to the Catholic Church. First, he resigned the distinguished ecclesiastical offices he held in Oxford and withdrew into private life and then the news broke that he had been received into the Catholic Church. That was in 1847, a year before the consecration of our church. Newman was not the first nor was he the last convert to the Catholic Church but he remains the most distinguished and he contributed to burgeoning confidence within the Catholic Community that they could no longer be ignored or dismissed.

There was a growing momentum amongst Catholics and in 1850, the hierarchy was restored with new diocesan sees, most of which are familiar to us today, though Lancaster Diocese did not come into being until 1924. Of the restoration of the hierarchy, the Times of October 19th wrote, 'It is, then, here in Westminster, among ourselves and by the English throne, that an Italian priest is to parcel out the spiritual dominion of this country – to employ the renegades of our National Church to restore a foreign usurpation over the consciences of men and to sow divisions in our political society and by an undisguised and systematic hostility to the institutions most nearly identified with our national freedom and our national faith? Such an intention must either be ludicrous or intolerable – either a delusion of some fanatical brain or treason to the constitution.' Emancipation did not equate to acceptance. A hundred and seventy-five years ago, there was, as I have already stated, a growing confidence amongst Catholics but there also remained a considerable antipathy towards the Church. It was against that backdrop that the generosity of Elizabeth Dalton made possible the building of this beautiful church. The faith had been kept alive in these parts by the bravery and sacrifice of many individuals.

Finally, there was and is a lasting and highly visible monument to the Catholic faith in Thurnham. I know that this church has a special place in your hearts and it lifts my own heart every time I come here. I am reminded of a hymn which I learned in my Anglican days but which does not seem to have made it into any of the Catholic hymn books:

'We love this place, O God, wherein thine honour dwells: the joy of thine abode all earthly joy excels. We love the house of prayer, wherein thy servants meet; and thou, O Lord, art there, thy chosen flock to greet.'

We are richly blessed to be able to worship here week by week and today we give thanks for those who have >>



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The Journey in His Presence

During the summer St Joseph's Church Lancaster held special event to celebrate the Centenary of Fr. Giussani, the founder of the Catholic movement of "Comunione e Liberazione". Fr Giussani was not only a priest but also an educator. He inspired many young people, he was revolutionary in his time because he understood that faith was something connected not only to the church but to all aspects of life. He was passionate about beauty, art and music. He amazed his students with his proposal directed first and foremost to their reason and their freedom and by his capacity to reach the depths of the human heart.

The event entitled 'The Journey in His Presence' combined music, readings from articles and books of Fr Giussani and some clips from the international ground-breaking series, 'The Chosen' and it was a real journey in faith.

The event explored the reason for our very being and our failings but shared the hope and beauty of being Catholic and to feel the experience of forgiveness in the unity of the Church. Every step was connected to a reading, a hymn or a piece of music and to a clip of 'The Chosen'.

It was a very eclectic evening and many people were struck and curious about Fr Giussani and his life, they were also amazed by the wonderful music played and sung.

Admission was free but we asked for a donation for a project supported by AVSI, which is a non-profit organization founded by people connected to the Communion and Liberation movement. In particular, we choose to support the building of a Musical Academy of Little Prince Primary School, in Kenya.

People were very generous, and we raised £367.69.

The evening ended with a fantastic refreshment where some new friendships blossomed! A big thank you to all the people involved in organising and all the people who trusted us and came to support us! *Laura, St. Joseph's, Lancaster*



>> gone before us and who have made this possible. We give thanks for the faithful who have bathed this place in prayer, for the priests who have celebrated the sacraments here. We are to be wise stewards of this privileged heritage and it will be the hope of all who worship here that this fine church will be populated by future generations who in their turn will come to recognise the sacredness of this place.

But we all know buildings come and go. Our calling is to make disciples of all nations. The bright light of faith was kept burning in this place long before 1848 because of the courage and conviction of countless souls, most of whom will be known to God alone. We honour the memory of those who have gone before us by taking the love of Christ out into a world which is lost without it.

Fr David Branford

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On Sunday 27th August at the 9.30am Mass at St. Clare's, Preston one server received the silver medal of the Guild of St. Stephen after faithfully serving for 10 years and two others received their bronze medals. Congratulations to all three.

Left - Ian Mulholland as Diocesan Director for the Guild of St. Stephen made the award of the silver medal and Fr John Mark Agulefo awarded the two bronze medals. Right - A lovely occasion for the great team of altar servers at St. Clare's who are a credit to Fr John Mark Agulefo and assistant priest Fr Stephen Talbutt and the whole Parish.

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