

FREE

The Catholic



VOICE of Lancaster

The Official Newspaper to
the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 357 + March '24

INSIDE:
pg8 Part One –
Stations of the Cross



By the time this edition reaches the pews we will already be three weeks into our Lenten observances as we prepare for the great celebration of Easter. So, it is probably a good time to take stock on how well we are doing to grow our relationship with Jesus that will enable our lives to be beacons of hope in our broken world.

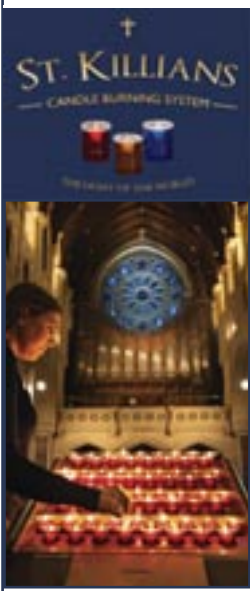
Perhaps some good intentions have fallen by the wayside, if so, there is still time to re-focus; maybe we haven't started at all, well start now and make the last few weeks of Lent count; or maybe everything is going according to plan, well pray that this can be sustained for a few weeks more. It is through our Lenten observances that we not only come closer to Jesus but we learn a lot about ourselves. By recognising our weaknesses and seeking the loving forgiveness of our Saviour through the Sacrament of Reconciliation we come even closer to Jesus. So why not make a visit to the Confessional in these remaining weeks of Lent, don't worry if this has not been a regular component of your spiritual life so far, the blessings to be gained are immeasurable.

The Catholic Voice of Lancaster wishes all its readers a grace filled Lent and a very Happy Easter!

“
During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully

Pope Francis ”

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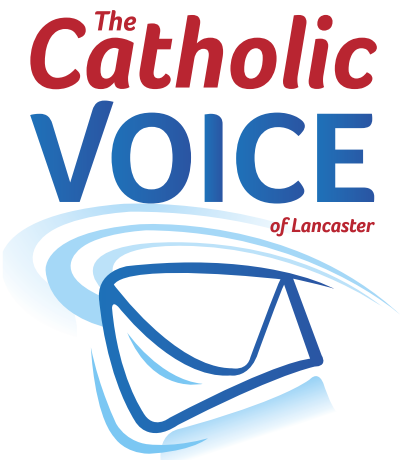
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72 altar servers and their families, from across the Diocese, gathered for the annual Archconfraternity (Guild) of St Stephen meal at the Castle Hotel in Kendal on the 30th November 2023. This was a special occasion as it allowed servers to meet others from a wide variety of parishes in an informal setting, and to support each other in this important role. Guest of honour was Bishop Paul Swarbrick, along with Paul Briers, current lay National President of the Guild, and Michael O’Leary the former lay National President.

The Guild exists to encourage the highest standards of serving at the Church’s liturgy and so contribute to a more fruitful worship of God. It seeks to provide altar servers with a greater understanding of what they are doing, so that they may serve with increasing reverence and prayerfulness.

Our special guest speaker was Canon Hugh Pollock VG, Parish Priest of Kendal, who spoke about his journey to the priesthood.

This was an excellent speech and highlighted the unique ways that God calls us all to serve Him, no matter what the vocation or situation.

A quiz about different aspects of both serving and the Church then followed, and the evening concluded by the presentation of a number of certificates by Bishop Paul for many years of long-standing service. The recipients were Paul Hilton and Dawn Hilton (*St Joseph’s, Lancaster*), Paul Woodhouse (*Parish of Christ the King and St Kentigern’s Blackpool*), Paul Briers (*Christ the Good Shepherd Parish, Workington*), Michael Moyles (*St. Maria Goretti Parish, Preston*) and Frank Gillett (*Blessed Sacrament Parish, Preston*).

Thanks should go to Ian Mulholland, Lancaster Diocesan Director, for organising the event, Paul Woodhouse for the photography, along with Bishop Paul and Canon Pollock for a very successful and inspiring evening.
Christopher Massey – Parish of the Holy Cross (Kirkham & Wesham)

Lent Practice Laudato Si' Animators Lenten Practices

My daughter, a very orthodox Catholic, and I have a difference of opinion about what are the best kinds of penances in Lent. She agrees with the traditional idea of temporarily giving up something one enjoys. I feel that this is a wasted opportunity. My daughter argues, as does the Church, that it strengthens one's will power as well as makes an offering to God. My choice is to give up something that one should not be consuming, getting into the habit of doing without it during Lent, then continuing without it after Lent. Or start doing something that you should be doing, and keep on after Lent.

This regular discussion with my daughter came about again this year, and caused me to wonder what were the thoughts of my fellow Animators concerning Lent. Did they have views about what people could or should be doing? If penance, what sort of penance? If resolutions, what sort of resolutions? Is it time to bring something new to Lent, or are the traditional actions the best?

The Animators are people, mainly Catholics, who have been trained by the Vatican-backed Laudato Si' Movement to inform and inspire others to engage in dialogue and action on the current environmental crises.

I think my favourite option for living Lent, given the massive over-consumption that the world is drowning under, is to buy nothing at all that isn't essential. And if we carried that on after Lent, what a success!

Clare, while appreciating the positive sacrifice of buying nothing, prefers "to do something extra, something which has often become a part of my

everyday life". One example she gives is 'Meditation Monday', the aim of which is to manage stress, improve mood and find peace in one's daily life.

Another extra she does is a 'Lenten Pilgrimage, where local people are invited to attend a different denominational church each Sunday afternoon'.

John likes to do a variety of positive things, so he joins ecumenical Lent groups and reads daily spiritual writings. To add to the variety, he also gives up alcohol. But he feels that the best thing would be to do practical action and outreach, such as helping refugees.

Geraldine is not so keen on "sudden, major change". She feels that slow, gradual change suits some people better, despite her having successfully given up things permanently after giving them up during Lent - sugar for example. She would encourage both sacrificial penance and doing something extra.

Susan believes that Lent is a good time "to examine our lifestyles and change our hearts so that love for God's creation is expanded". Especially, she says, to consider how ethical the products we buy are.

One surprise from this survey which cannot possibly cover all our Animators views is that no-one seems keen on fasting. Not only is fasting traditional in Lent, it can have positive health benefits. Still, it's not for me!

It seems to me that we Animators agree with each other in most ways - buying little, having a positive attitude when giving up things, continuing after Lent if we can, adding a spiritual activity. So, a mixture of the old and the new perhaps. It's typical of the Animators that the new embraces concern for the natural environment.

V. Bell for the Laudato Si' Animators UK

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YOUTH MATTERS

The start of 2024 has seen just about every type of weather in Keswick – snow, ice, rain wind, a bit of sun. The only thing missing has been a heatwave!

We started our year with a team retreat at Boarbank Hall. We spent two nights together as a ministry team, resting, relaxing and thinking about our work via a few talks and reflective sessions. We also joined the sisters for their prayer and daily Mass. A lovely start to the new year and a great bit of team bonding. Since the term started in earnest, we have welcomed lots of groups from our diocese and beyond and it is looking like 2024 will see us welcoming more schools than we have for a long time.

Advent Retreat
In December, we held our annual Advent Retreat and we were delighted by how many people turned up. Including our own team, we had around twenty people for what proved to be a great experience.

We had a lot of fun and spent a lot of time thinking about what Advent and Christmas are really all about!

Altar Servers Retreat
We also held our annual Altar Servers retreat this January with an amazing twenty five people coming along! As you can imagine, Mass at the end of the retreat had a somewhat unusual proportion of servers to regular mass goers!

Would you like to join the team?
We now operate a rolling recruitment system for interns (*formerly called Gap Year volunteers*) which means that suitable people can start at various different points in the year. Our Catholic Youth Ministry Internship scheme offers great training and experience working in a dynamic youth service.

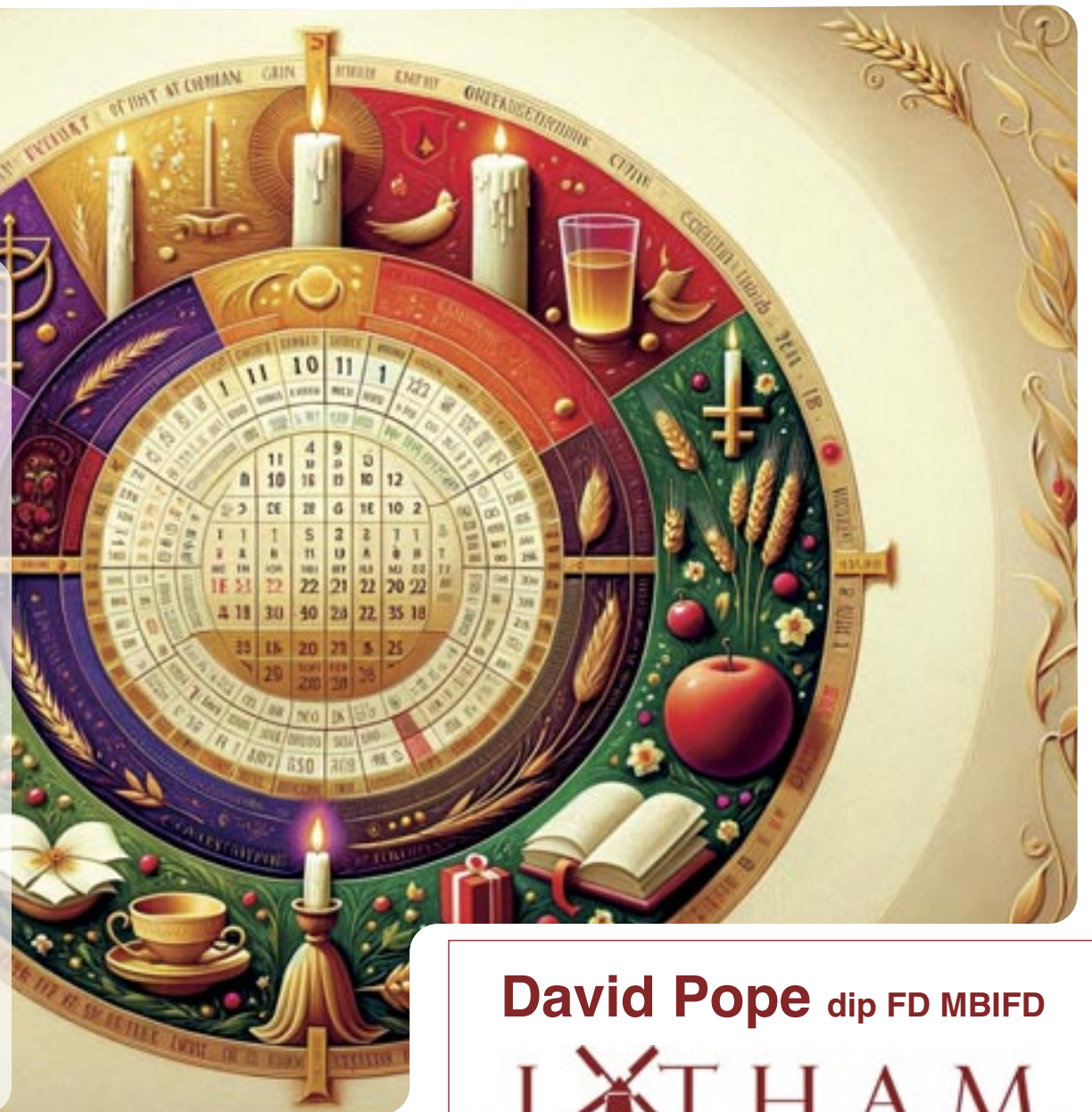
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What's coming up?
Easter Retreat // Mar 28-31 // The next open retreat at Castlerigg will be our annual Easter Retreat. It runs from Maundy Thursday through to Easter Sunday and gives us a chance to journey together through the most powerful time of the year, learning more about God, about who we are and hopefully having a hack of a lot of fun along the way. The retreat costs £85 but as usual we don't want money to be an obstacle for anybody so if you can't afford that, please get in touch. Bookings are open now.

Summer Retreat // May 24-25 // This 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. Bookings open after the Easter Retreat.



Celebrating Liturgical Seasons with Young People Engaging and Educating in Faith



The liturgical seasons developed early in the Churches history and offer a rich tapestry of faith and tradition that can deeply engage young people in the church. Celebrating these seasons isn't just about observing rituals; it's an opportunity to educate and involve youth in the faith's history, symbolism, and spiritual significance. Effective involvement in these seasons can make faith a vibrant and living experience for the young members of the congregation.

Advent, the period of preparation for Christmas, is a fantastic starting point. Youth activities during this time can include creating Advent calendars that incorporate daily scripture readings or acts of kindness. Organising a youth-led Advent wreath-making workshop can be both fun and educational, providing a hands-on way to understand the symbolism behind the Advent wreath.

Christmas itself is a time of joy and celebration, and there are numerous ways to involve youth. Nativity plays or Christmas pageants are traditional favourites. Encouraging young people to participate in or even lead the organisation of these events helps them connect with the story of Jesus' birth in a personal way. Carol singing, whether in the church or as part of community outreach, can also be a joyful and bonding experience.

Lent, the period leading up to Easter, is a time for reflection and penance. Youth activities during Lent can focus on the themes of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Organising a youth-led Lenten food drive or a charity fundraiser can be a way to practically engage with the spirit of almsgiving. Youth group discussions or retreats focusing on personal reflection and spiritual growth can be particularly impactful during this season.

Holy Week and Easter are the climax of the liturgical year. Participating in the services of Holy Week, such as the Stations of the Cross, Good Friday service, and the Easter Vigil, can be a profound experience for young people. Organising special youth-led reflections or dramatisations of the Stations of the Cross can deepen their understanding and engagement.

Pentecost, celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, is another great opportunity for youth engagement. Activities could include a Pentecost-themed youth service or a workshop about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This can be a time to encourage young people to think about their own spiritual gifts and how they can use them in the service of the church and community.

Ordinary Time, though less festive, is a period where the focus is on growing in faith. This can be a time for ongoing catechesis, Bible study groups, or mentoring programs where older members of the congregation share their faith experiences with the youth.

In all these celebrations, it's important to strike a balance between education and fun. Incorporating modern elements like social media challenges, faith-based apps, or interactive digital content can make these traditions more accessible and engaging for today's youth.

In conclusion, celebrating the liturgical seasons with youth in the church is about much more than just participation in rituals. It's an opportunity to educate them about the faith, involve them in meaningful traditions, and help them experience the spiritual richness of these seasons. By doing so, the church can ignite a lasting passion for the faith in the hearts of its youngest members, fostering a deeper and more personal connection with their spiritual heritage.

David Pope dip FD MBIFD

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 - Amend or shorten letters or to refuse to publish them (no correspondence to discuss decisions taken will be entered into)
 - Publish a response if deemed appropriate



Dear Editor, ++++++

I am a parishioner of St Wulstan’s and St Edmund, Fleetwood.

I pray that every parishioner and every person or family member that parishioners know join in saying the rosary (*or part thereof*) every day for peace in our world. Parishioners of St Mary’s Fleetwood and St Mary’s Leyland have also been approached to join with us.

This rosary we hope will become part of our daily habit and hopefully the practice will spread. Our John Bradburne ministry (*sick and housebound parishioners*) is a precious and valuable ministry and they have taken to saying this daily prayer, our greatest weapon in the fight against man’s hate and destruction in our world.

Imagine if every parish in every diocese joined with us!! Christ states “*knock and the door will be opened...ask and you shall receive*”.....Are we asking? Yes, but are we Loud enough?....

The rosary should be a constant prayer with no time limit except one we put on ourselves. As John Lennon said “*as breathing is my life to stop I dare not dare*”....Rosarying to stop war to stop I dare not dare.

Name and e mail address supplied ++++++

Thank you letter from The Salvation Army, Blackpool Citadel & South Church and Community Centre to Terry Mattinson and The Action Youth Group

Dear Terry and Members of The Action Youth Group, ++++++

Thank you very much once again for your generous donation of £200 and continuing to support our work here at Blackpool Citadel. This is greatly appreciated. Captain John enjoyed meeting you all and I am sure he gave you an insight into the work of The Salvation Army. We are hoping that you will be able to visit us here sometime soon and tell us about all the great work you are doing in the Community. Thank you for all you do, it really does change lives for the better.

We have been very busy over the Christmas period with our Toy Appeal, providing 2554 children with toys to ensure they have a had a happy Christmas. At the same time continuing to help those going through a difficult time in their lives who come here daily. The numbers have increased this year and we are seeing up to ninety people each day.

On behalf of our Corps Officers and everyone at the Salvation Army in Blackpool thank you for helping us to help others. We wish you a happy and successful New Year.

With Many Thanks and Best Wishes,

Tina Meredith, Corps Secretary, Blackpool Citadel ++++++



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We are a growing family of schools.
Our Trust is now 13 schools, 11 Primaries and 2 Secondaries across North Lancashire and Cumbria.



Canon Alf Hayes reports on a visit of John Pridmore to St Wulstan's, Fleetwood

John is fairly well known and some people may know already that John is an ex-gangster turned evangelist and gives missions all over the world. John recently made his second mission to St Wulstans and it was very well attended.

I accompanied John on visits to our schools where he had an amazing effect on both pupils and Staff. His 'one hour slot' at Cardinal Allen School turned into three hours, such was the interest. John is truly anointed as a dispenser of God's

mercy and forgiveness and tells a great story of redemption based on his own life of evil turned into good. If any other parish or school is interested in a mission or visit from John please contact Canon Alf at St Wulstan's, Fleetwood.

Canon A T Hayes



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Stations of the Cross

TO THE READERS OF THE CATHOLIC VOICE OF LANCASTER

I am a parishioner at St. Bernadette's Church in Bispham, Blackpool. I have been the parish secretary at that church for about 20 years which of course included the period of lockdown 2020 - 2021.

Fr. Peter Clarke was our parish priest then and he did his utmost to support the parish by sending daily emails of spiritual guidance. Together the "bubble" known as the Sacristy team worked closely to provide as normal a service as possible from our technically unsophisticated church. Masses were said most days, many times with a congregation of one or two. Christmas and Easter services went ahead but with a booking system to cater for social distancing. They were strange quiet times and as so often happens necessity became the mother of

invention. We learned how to provide for parishioners by using a video on a phone and streaming this to a You Tube Channel. But we had to be careful not to breach copyright when we used hymns or other publications. This was the case when Fr. Peter Clarke wanted to record a version of the Stations of the Cross. We needed to write our own adaptation.

This was the resulting text. I wrote from the point of view of a mother looking on helplessly as her child is taken from her. Fr. Peter wrote the lovely prayers for the second paragraph.

The corona virus pandemic and resulting lockdown plunged us into some strange times. I hope that this piece of prose was one of the more positive results.

Eileen MacCormac 2023



Stations of the Cross with Mary, a mother ...

THE FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

The last time I had seen my son, he was at the Garden of Gethsemane. He had been praying when the soldiers came to arrest him. Now I saw him again, his face was swollen and bruised. His eyes were half closed. I felt my heart tighten, breath caught in my chest and my eyes filled with tears. Pilate, looking nervous, offered the crowd a choice, my son or Barabbas, the criminal. They yelled for my son to be crucified. I could not stop them. I made no noise. My tears fell.

Lord Jesus Christ, we come to you with humility, grateful that you bring us a loving, just judgement. Through the merits of your condemnation may we be granted a welcome into your heavenly home.

THE SECOND STATION: JESUS TAKES HIS CROSS

After the shock, I breathed again, jostled and pushed on every side, the baying crowd moved as one body to the place called Gabbatha, the pavement. Pushed to the floor my son hit the cold, hard stone, his clothes torn, head bleeding. I felt the pain as they burdened him with the cross. If only I could go to him. All I could do was look on, loving him.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our weakness, grateful that you were prepared to carry a cross for us, hewn out of our sinfulness. Through the merits of your taking up the cross, grant us your mercy.

THE THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

That heavy wooden burden, digging into his shoulders, each stumbling step an agony I felt as I followed my son towards Calvary. A loose stone tripped him up and he fell to the ground. A new torture across his twisted back. Is this the end? I trembled at the thought. But slowly he rose to take his burden again. They beat him with whips. I wanted to shield him from their blows. But I knew it must be. I remembered Simeon. I followed my son, loving him.

Lord, Jesus, we come to you in our fallen humanity, grateful that you bore the weight of Adam's sin, washed clean in our baptism. Through the merits of this first fall, restore us anew, once again.



THE FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS GRIEVING MOTHER

The crowd had fallen away leaving me space to edge closer to my son. So near he could hear my voice as I called. He turned and I met his eyes. In that moment we shared a lifetime of love and pain. He seemed to take courage from me, and I from him. I prayed my thanks as I followed my son.

Lord, Jesus, we come to you as your brothers and sisters, thankful for the love of your Mother Mary. Through the merits of your meeting on the way to Calvary, keep us always in her loving care.



8

THE FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

My son was now almost completely exhausted and helpless, I could tell from his face as I watched him struggle with his heavy load. Each footfall weaker than the last. I could feel every pain. I longed for the end. Suddenly from the onlookers, the guards pulled a man. At first, he resisted but he saw his two sons and then the beaten man. He took up the cross with my son. My soul gave thanks. I followed with love for them both.

Lord Jesus, we come to you as your servants, seeking to help all those in need, near and far. Through the merits of your support from Simon, grant us the grace to love our neighbours as ourselves.

THE SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

I was able to stay unnoticed near Jesus. A woman pushed past the guards and with a long, fine linen cloth she wiped my son's bloodied and sweat drenched face. "Why," she cried. "What has he done". She was soon pushed aside with no answer. My eyes gave her thanks for loving my son.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our need, grateful for your compassion. Through the merits of the tender action of Veronica, may we be spurred to imitate her loving touch.

THE SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

"Oh no, not again," I cry to myself as my son stumbles and falls. Instinct propels me forward to help him, but the soldiers push me back. Again, he staggers to his feet and continues the dreadful journey. I struggle with anguish at what must be, remembering the temple. I follow my son.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our sinfulness, knowing it is the weight of our sins which cause you to fall. Through the merits of this second fall, grant us your forgiveness.

10

THE EIGHTH STATION: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN

A small group of tearful women had gathered at a turn in his path. I saw him pause long enough to comfort them. This was his life's work, from his earliest days, to think of others before himself. They wept in each other's arms. I wept with them and followed my son loving him more.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our sorrow, blessed by your compassion. Through the merits of your meeting with these women, let us seek to share your compassion with those who weep.

THE NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

I feared this surely must be the end. His bent and broken body could take no more. The effort of the climb to the place of executions was too much I thought. The soldiers took out their frustration on him, treating him like an animal. They dragged him to his feet. What was coming next? It had to be. I bore the pain loving my son.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our brokenness, lost and weak, weighed down by the world. Through the merits of your third fall, bring a fulfilling and righteous direction to our lives.

THE TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

My son was laid bare. His tortured body visible for all to see. No dignity for a criminal. But he has done nothing wrong. The crowds had dwindled but the soldiers did their work without mercy. I saw their faces - it was just work. Someday they might have sons to love.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our emptiness, filling our lives with material things. Through the merits of the stripping of your garments, let us store up treasures in heaven, rather than on earth.

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THE ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS
We had come to Golgotha where my son would die. Released now from his burden, his body was limp and helpless as they tied him to the cross. The tools they used, the hammer and the nails, so familiar and yet now, so corrupt. Every blow struck the sword deeper in my heart. I remembered Simeon and loved my son the more.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our pain, knowing that it is each one of us who through our wrongdoing nailed you to the cross. Through the merits of your Passion, bring us your peace and healing.

THE TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS
I heard my son cry out, the words from the ancient scrolls, "My God my God why have you forsaken me," the crowd mocked him in answer. They gave him vinegar to drink. I wanted to cry out too, feeling the wrench of my heart. But he was not mine to keep. His work was complete. My love could not be deeper.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our mortality, conscious that whilst we brought only death into the world, you brought us our redemption. Through the merits of your saving death, bring us to eternal life.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS
John, his friend was there at my side as they took my son's body down. At long last I held him in my arms, the warmth draining from him. I held him close, so close. I remembered the stable, when I first held him, our joy, our fear, our love. Too soon taken away. But through my sorrow, his pain, he had brought life to all. This had to be. The world would love my son.

Lord Jesus, we come to you with our love, a shadow of your mother's love for you. Through the merits of being held in her arms, allow your mother to hold us close to her, ever nearer to you.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB
Someone had given a tomb nearby and a few friends carried him there. I wept as I anointed the bruised and broken body. The sweet-smelling liniment reminding me of the precious gifts at his birth. A king not of this world. His suffering was over. I wanted to remain with him in the quiet of the tomb, but the time of Sabbath approached. The stone sealed his burial place. I mourned my son.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our hope, knowing that your time in the tomb was only to last a short time. Through the merits of your burial, open up the gates of heaven to all who believe you.



THE FIFTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

I was in a daze. Drained of life myself, not wanting to live without him. The sacrifice of his life seemed an unbearable bargain. And yet what news we heard; the tomb empty the stone rolled away? The words had been ever present in my heart, a saviour had come to us. He had risen from the dead and brought us new life. I rejoiced as I followed my son.

Lord Jesus, we come to you in our joy, with the gift of faith that death is not the end. Through the merits of your death and resurrection, grant us the grace to be with you and our Blessed Mother Mary, in heaven, for ever and ever. Amen.

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The Catholic Teaching Alliance

The Catholic Teaching Alliance (CTA), established in 2014 as a school-based provider of PGCE with QTS teacher training courses, offers a practical, hands-on route into teaching. Training is delivered by outstanding practitioners alongside experienced tutors from the University of Cumbria to deliver a comprehensive programme, combined with practical experience gained on placements in local schools. For every level of teacher training, Early Primary, Primary, Secondary or Secondary with post 16, look no further than the Catholic Teaching Alliance. We have study sites in Preston and Blackburn. Now in our 10th year of teacher training, the CTA has trained over 300 teachers, many of whom work in our alliance primary and secondary schools.

Why do people choose to train with the Catholic Teaching Alliance?

"A colleague, who I worked with for many years, recommended the CTA programme to myself, expressing their enjoyment of the course." Kelly

"Upon talking to colleagues and hearing their firm recommendations I applied for the CTA and was accepted on the course." Rebecca

"Schools Direct seemed like the most efficient route for me to begin my career." Raeesa

Hear what our trainees have to say about their experiences on the course:

"Training with the CTA has enabled me to develop skills, old and new, that teachers use in the classroom every day. The course has been informative, and included lectures from experts and subject specialists. Whilst on placement, I have experienced the diversity of teaching styles, aspects of curriculum and wider school life – from clubs to trips and plays. Support from both the Alliance itself and placement schools has been amazing, enabling me to build confidence and teach at my own pace, in my own way. Likewise, other trainee teachers have been there to discuss ideas, motivate and challenge one another. My experiences in schools and alongside like-minded professionals have truly enabled me to grow into a teacher." Jordan

"From the first moment, I felt very welcomed onto the course and very much supported throughout the year of study. The course allowed me to gain a lot of experience teaching in Catholic primary schools. Along with feeling very much supported by the course leaders, I have built up a real friendship with the other course members, feeling like we really do support each other on our journey together." Kelly

The CTA offers a small inclusive cohort of trainees; a group who become a support network throughout the course and very often lifelong friends. Our aim is to get to know our trainees; guide, support and challenge, and ultimately prepare them for a successful and enriching career in teaching, heading towards becoming the Catholic leaders of the future.

What have trainees said about the Catholic Teaching Alliance?

"The Catholic ethos shines through the Alliance and all associated with it I would highly recommend the CTA for anyone wishing to pursue their teaching career!" Rebecca

"I would recommend the CTA to anyone wanting to pursue their career in teaching, feeling the support and training gained by the team will allow me to be the best teacher I can once I become a fully qualified teacher in the coming months." Kelly

"I would love to extend a thank you to the primary schools and to our programme leads from the University and the CTA for all of the hard work, patience and encouragement that me and the rest of the cohort have been provided with. The Catholic Teaching Alliance is a lovely community which I am grateful to be a part of." Alison

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Primary Programme Lead, for providing us with an arsenal of quality training and foundation to equip us to be great teachers of tomorrow. I would also like to thank the University Programme Lead who has guided me through the course in great depth, providing a positive attitude and lots of humour along the way!" Raeesa

"I will always be grateful for my supportive mentor during my placement and the Catholic Teaching Alliance who have helped me through this journey. I have really enjoyed teaching, being a part of CTA and seeing how far I've come along." Amrin

"I wholeheartedly recommend training with the CTA; it absolutely helps you become the teacher you want to be." Jordan

A strength of our programme is our Alliance Schools. They welcome CTA trainees into their school families,

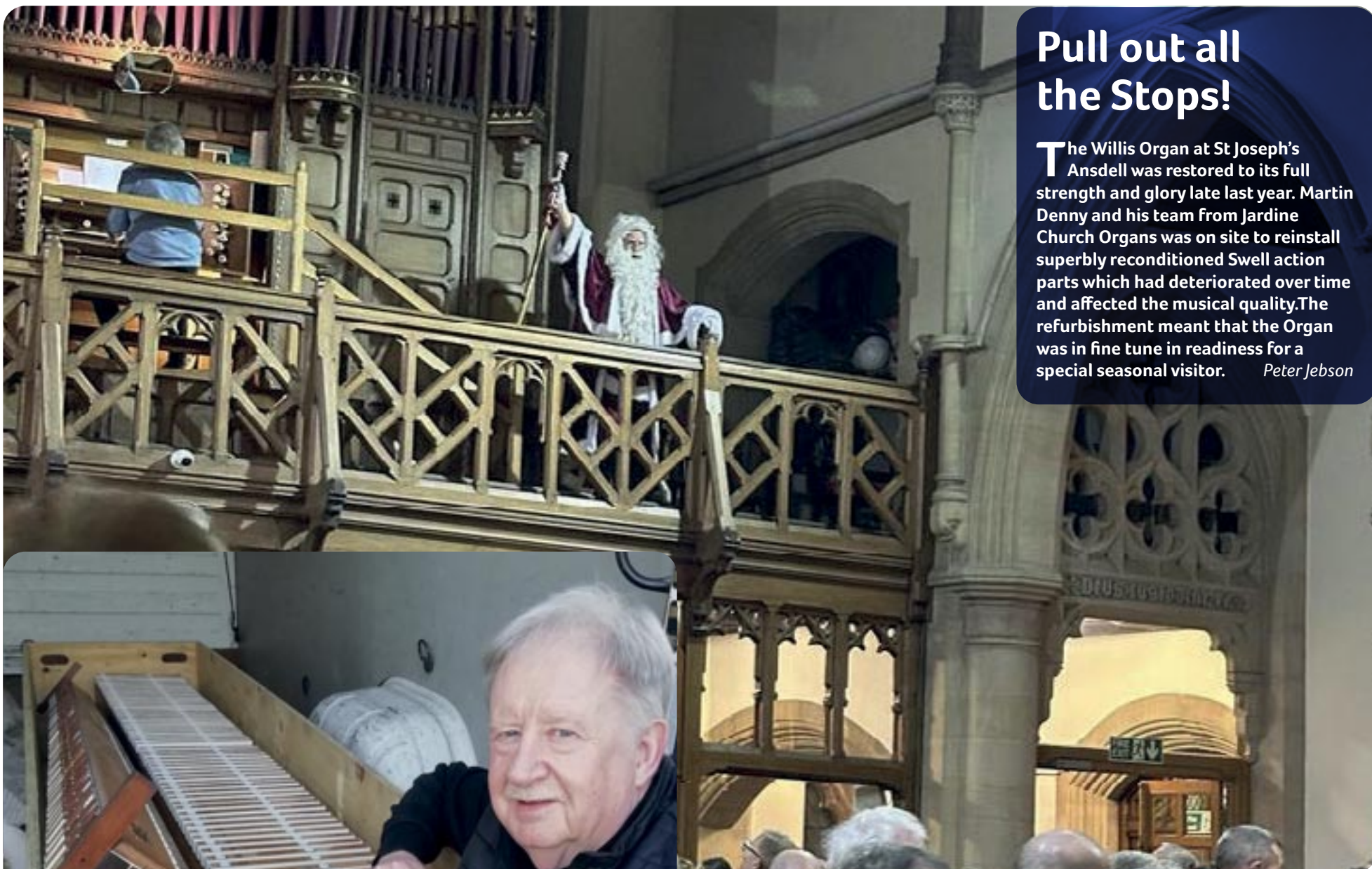
supporting them within the classroom and in the wider school life. The CTA course offers a significant amount of time in the classroom, learning from current professionals; these days in school are supported by training, delivered by experienced teachers and leaders of education, to support growth in subject knowledge and the pedagogical thinking and research that underpins high quality teaching.

CTA placement schools are Catholic schools around Preston, towards Blackpool and the Fylde coast in the West, across to Blackburn in the East and northwards to Lancaster.

If you are hardworking, relish a challenge and want to make a difference to the children who are placed in your care, we can provide the support, knowledge and experience you will need to achieve a Postgraduate Certificate in Education with Qualified Teacher Status.

Our PGCE with QTS programmes are delivered in partnership with the University of Cumbria. QTS is ratified by the University of Warwick.

If you wish to find out more information please contact the Catholic Teaching Alliance at cta@olchs.lancs.sch.uk or telephone **01772 326931**.



Pull out all the Stops!

The Willis Organ at St Joseph's Ansdell was restored to its full strength and glory late last year. Martin Denny and his team from Jardine Church Organs was on site to reinstall superbly reconditioned Swell action parts which had deteriorated over time and affected the musical quality. The refurbishment meant that the Organ was in fine tune in readiness for a special seasonal visitor. *Peter Jebson*



Parish of St John Henry Newman

On the Feast of the Epiphany at St Mary's Morecambe six altar servers were awarded their Guild of St. Stephen Silver Medal and one altar server a Bronze medal.

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“Isaac hasn’t seen his family for three years. He’s not allowed to work. He’s doing his best, but it’s hard to stay positive. Every couple of weeks, I take him out for a trip. He confided in me one time, ‘I don’t know where I’d be now without Stella Maris,’” said Steve Willows, Stella Maris’ Regional Port Chaplain in Immingham, Lincolnshire. Stella Maris (*formerly known as Apostleship of the Sea*) is the Catholic charity supporting seafarers and fishers in the UK and worldwide.

Isaac is one of a growing number of fishers who has become a victim of modern slavery. According to the International Labour Organisation, migrant workers in particular are vulnerable to being deceived and coerced by brokers and recruitment agencies and forced to work on board vessels under the threat of force or by means of debt bondage.

Isaac (*not his real name*), left Ghana in 2020 and, because there were few job opportunities, he paid £1,000 to an agent for a UK fishing contract.

The moment he stepped on board the trawler, he sensed trouble. He and four other men were put to work immediately, with no training or safety equipment. They worked until midnight – and were woken at 4 am to start again.

With each gruelling day that passed, things got worse. *“There was no drinking water on board and never enough food,”* explained Isaac.

“Some of the crew shouted racist abuse at us, and we worked so many hours there was no time to cook or even wash.”

Steve first met Isaac in 2021 after Deacon Nick O’Neill, Stella Maris’ Senior Area Port Chaplain for the south of England and Wales, became aware of his plight, and that of four other seafarers, and alerted the police and other agencies. Stella Maris found the men a place to stay, fed them, provided clean clothes, and helped them navigate endless meetings and paperwork.

“Isaac felt shamed and broken by the cruel treatment he had received,” said Steve.

“Worse, he was not paid anything until he and the other fishers were rescued off the ship and we and the police got involved. It’s hard to believe this could happen off the coast of England.”

Stella Maris has launched a ground-breaking initiative aimed at helping to tackle modern slavery in UK ports and the UK maritime sector. A series of workshops in six ports (*Belfast, Bristol, Glasgow, Hull, Liverpool and Portsmouth*) have highlighted the issue and brought together stakeholders from ports, shipping, law enforcement agencies, anti-trafficking bodies, and other welfare agencies.



"The workshops are insightful and essential for those wishing to better understand the risks and issues caused by modern slavery," said participant James Riddick, Group Head of Supply Chain at Peel Ports.

Stella Maris CEO/National Director Tim Hill MBE said that Stella Maris is in a prime position to tackle modern slavery.

"Stella Maris' port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors are often first responders in cases of modern slavery within the port setting, and this puts us in a perfect position to be a galvanising force in tackling this issue.

"We have set up a "Cross Port Anti-Slavery Steering Group" with a first meeting to be held at the end of January. The group will seek to increase joined-up working across ports in the country and boost collaboration among the various maritime bodies and organisations to address and root-out modern slavery.

"Stella Maris' excellent ongoing partnership with port operators, shipping companies, P&I clubs, enforcement authorities and anti-trafficking organisations helps us to provide appropriate, timely and effective intervention and support to fishers and seafarers affected by modern slavery. Ultimately this is all about working together and drawing upon our respective strengths

and expertise to support those in need."

On 8th February, the Catholic Church will commemorate the life of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped and sold into slavery in Sudan when young. As this Feast Day approaches us, let us remember all those affected by modern slavery and human trafficking, including those trapped and exploited on fishing vessels around the world.

To find out more about Stella Maris' work, or to make a donation to its Lent Appeal about tackling modern slavery, go to: www.stellamaris.org.uk/lent *Greg Watts*



Steve Willows,
Regional Port
Chaplain.

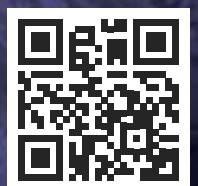
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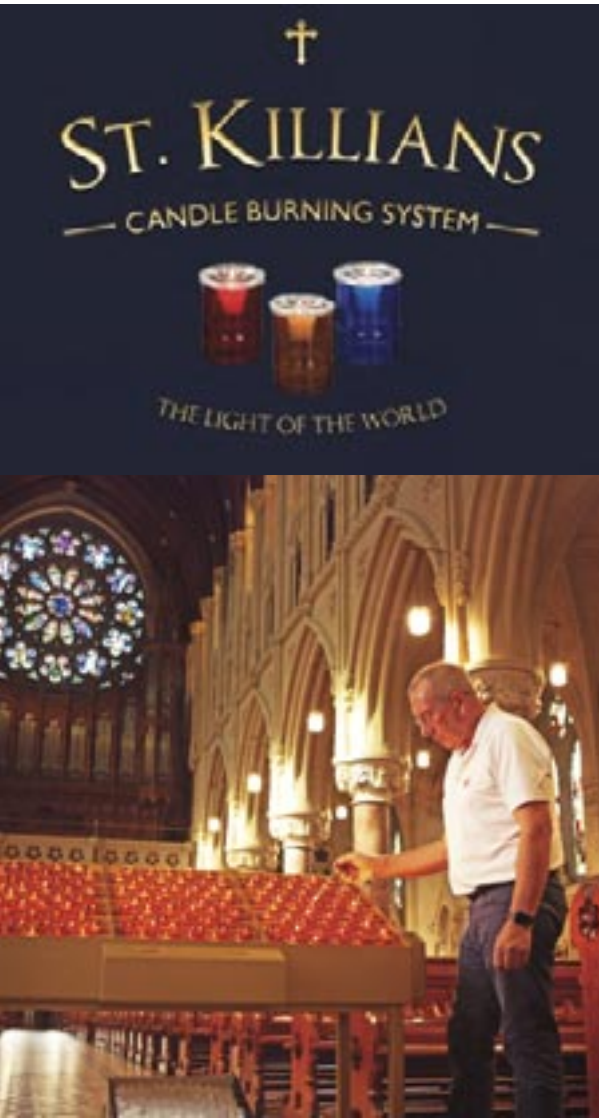
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