

The Official Newspaper to  
the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 360 + June '24

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# Bishop Stock welcomes Government decision to lift cap on Faith School places

*The Education Secretary, the Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, visited The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School the day before the announcement.*

**B**ishop Marcus Stock, Bishop Chair of the Catholic Education Service (CES), has welcomed the decision by the Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan, to lift the faith-based admissions cap on new free schools in England.

The decision paves the way for Catholic free schools to open, having previously been excluded under the 50 percent cap or 'rule' which would have forced schools to turn away some Catholic pupils.

Bishop Stock, Bishop of Leeds, said: "These proposals are welcome. Dioceses are well placed to respond to differing local educational demands around the country, including the provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Parents can welcome this also.

"Catholic education not only provides a high performing school sector and promotes the formation of children in values and virtues; it is more ethnically diverse than other schools, educates more pupils from the most deprived backgrounds, and builds social cohesion within our communities."

The Department for Education also has plans to enable new faith-based academies for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Catholic Church has a long history of SEND provision, and at present there are seven non-maintained Catholic SEND schools, three other independent Catholic SEND schools, and 16 other Catholic independent schools which are approved for SEND provision.

Find out about the work of St Rose's, a SEND all-through school in Stroud, Clifton Diocese, and St Vincent's, a school for visually impaired children in the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

**Consultation**  
The decision is subject to a seven-week public consultation that closes on 20 June 2024. We would encourage Catholics in England and Wales to respond positively to this consultation, you can make your views known by accessing Online consultation to lift the faith-based admissions cap. **CBCEW**

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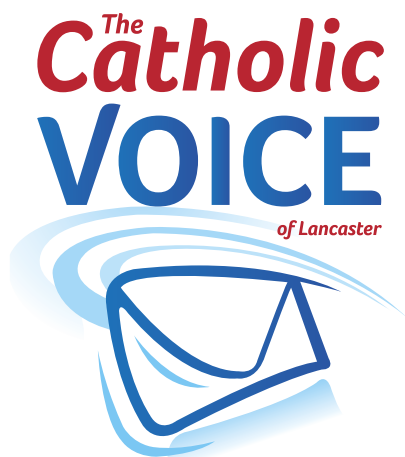
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# New Diocesan Data Protection Implementation & Microsoft Office 365 Rollout



**We are currently in a world full of technological advantages. Computers, e-mails and the internet are everyday occurrences to us in the 21st century. With the demand for using Information Technology in the workplace, comes the greater need for protection, especially in cyber-security, safeguarding and data protection.**

Information Technology is an important resource used within the Diocese of Lancaster, as we are increasingly reliant on computer systems at all levels of the diocese. It is often difficult to keep up to speed with the pace of these technological advances and the many positive and negatives that accompany them, such as 'General Data Protection Regulations' (GDPR). We, as a Diocese, must do all we can to protect our systems for the safeguarding of those we serve and the security of our data. In order to help reduce the chance of the Diocese falling victim to cyber criminals, the Bishop has appointed a Data Protection Committee, and recently asked me to take the lead as the 'Data Protection Officer' to aid the Diocese in strengthening our cyber security and data protection position by bringing it up to best organisational practices for data-handling and cloud storage.

A Catholic Diocese is not a 'normal' organisation, its organisational structures, the way it is funded and the contribution of volunteers who, though unpaid often take on important and strategic roles, is quite different from usual businesses and some other large charities, makes this an interesting challenge.

The Diocese is legally responsible for the safeguarding of

individuals', data and cyber security at all levels, and the status-quo is no longer considered best practice leaving the diocese open to large financial penalties if not addressed. So, we have been working to put in place all the foundational elements of a diocesan wide I.T system using Microsoft Office 365, and by following current best practices of 2024, starting with e-mail for clergy and local safeguarding volunteers.

The Diocese has invested and begun to roll out 'Microsoft Office 365' to all members of the clergy, parishes, and parish safeguarding representatives, using the new Email domain of LRCD.org.uk

Last February, members of the Data Protection Committee with the support of TPCS (an I.T Support Company based in Lancaster), had the opportunity to present three I.T Workshops throughout the Diocese, in Carlisle, Blackpool and Lancaster.

These workshops gave an insight to the 'big picture' of what the Diocese is trying to achieve in the area of Data Protection and how the new system will be implemented within the Diocese. More importantly these workshops gave the clergy an opportunity for some one-to-one help and assistance getting their new accounts working on their current computer systems.

As you can imagine, this project will take some time to rollout to all the parishes in the Diocese, but in the end, we will have a secure, functional, and easy to use e-mailing and data storage system that will be protected for the safeguarding of our data in the Diocese of Lancaster. *Fr Philip Wrigley, Data Protection Officer*



# 'World's Worst Crisis' in Sudan – CAFOD launches Emergency Appeal



CAFOD is the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, and part of Caritas International. Working with communities across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America to fight poverty and injustice. The agency works with people in need, regardless of race, gender, religion, or nationality. CAFOD has been working in Sudan since the 1970s supporting livelihood opportunities, particularly for smallholder farmers and women. CAFOD is on the ground in Sudan and neighbouring countries, working tirelessly alongside local partners to address urgent humanitarian needs.

*Photograph opposite: Women and children collecting safe drinking water from a newly constructed water pump in White Nile State, Sudan. Help is reaching those who need it, but there are so many people who need more support.*

**T**he people of Sudan need our help urgently. The situation has gone from serious to desperate very quickly. The UN is calling it 'the world's worst displacement crisis'. Due to the extremely worrying emergency situation in Sudan, CAFOD are launching an emergency appeal for donations to get aid to them on the biggest scale we can muster.

With over eight million people having fled their homes to escape violence, after fighting erupted a year ago between government forces and paramilitaries, and with 25 million in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, CAFOD says there is a short window to act before the growing season in Sudan starts in June, as fears grow of an impending – yet preventable – famine.

Jo Kitterick, CAFOD's director of participation, said: "Many aid agencies exited Sudan when the current fighting erupted a year ago. Right now Catholic agencies in the Caritas network that CAFOD is part of, supported by the Church of Sudan, are some of the only organisations able to deliver aid to support the Sudanese people. The communities we serve in Sudan have issued a desperate cry for help and

**“**  
...it is not too late for Sudan to return from the brink...

Barbara Woodward

we are inviting the Catholic community to stand alongside us and the local Sudanese organisations we fund in responding to their call.”

CAFOD has been working alongside communities in Sudan for over fifty years. Donations made to its Sudan crisis appeal – whether online or via collections in parishes this weekend – will go towards supporting families in Sudan and surrounding countries, who are already contending with extreme hunger, as communities strive to stop the crisis becoming the worst in living memory.

Speaking at the weekend, Ambassador Barbara Woodward, the UK's permanent representative to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council that while Sudan is in the grip of the world's worst hunger and displacement crisis, “it is not too late for Sudan to return from the brink,” as she urged the warring parties in Sudan to engage in political negotiations to bring about peace, and for greater access to humanitarian access to reach those most in need. Donations can be made at: [cafod.org.uk/SudanAppeal](http://cafod.org.uk/SudanAppeal)

**”**

Patrick Gardner, Community Participation Coordinator – CAFOD Lancaster

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**G**reetings from Sunny Keswick. After a pretty half-hearted Spring, the Lake District is finally starting to feel like it has remembered to prepare for summer after all!

As you'd expect, we are very busy at the moment. We are now booked pretty solid until next winter with only a few gaps here and there's some exciting things going on.

**Easter**  
We celebrated our Easter Retreat over the Easter weekend and had a lovely time.

Social Media

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There were just short of twenty people all in. We went to Keswick parish for the Good Friday service and and we headed to Windermere for the Easter Vigil. Our open retreats really have taken off this year with good numbers coming through for all of the programmes.

**Have you put 15th September in your diary yet?**  
As we mentioned last time, we are holding our first Castlerigg Open Day since before Covid! We are opening up the house and grounds for a day and welcoming not just the local Keswick community but the whole diocese. Basically, anybody who wants to come.

The day starts at midday, 12pm and ends with Mass at 3pm. Bishop Paul will be with us to celebrate Mass – a Mass which will also be a commissioning for the new Castlerigg team as they begin their year together.

**September 15th Castlerigg Manor. 12pm Start. Mass at 3pm. Get it in your diaries!**

**Would you like to join the Team?** We are currently looking for young Christians (*usually aged 18-22*) to join our Youth Ministry Internship Scheme. It's a great chance to get some brilliant training, qualifications, and experiences.

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. For more info email [jack@castleriggmanor.co.uk](mailto:jack@castleriggmanor.co.uk)

**Parish Visits**  
At the moment, we are trying to visit as many parishes as we can. The aim of this is to introduce people to the Youth Service and the work that we do. We are slowly working our way outwards from Keswick, doing a couple of visits a month, so look out for us.

- WHAT'S COMING UP?**
- Summer Retreat // May 24-25 //** 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. Bookings will open after the Easter Retreat.
- Catholic Students Retreat // Nov 15-17 //** After the success of our first students retreat last year, we are holding another one this autumn. Once again, there will be a discounted rate for students and this year there will be a theme holding the weekend together. Bookings will open in the summer.
- Advent Retreat // Dec 13-15 //** The next open retreat after the summer retreat will be the Advent Retreat in mid December. Bookings open in September.





## Faith and Modern Challenges - Guiding Youth in Today's Complex World

**I**n a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world, the role of the Church in addressing contemporary social and ethical issues with young people is more crucial than ever. Today's youth are growing up in an era marked by significant societal shifts, technological advancements, and moral complexities. The Church can provide a guiding light in navigating these challenges, helping young people to understand and integrate their faith with the realities of the modern world.

One of the primary tasks is to address the apparent disconnect between what the Church teaches and contemporary societal norms. Issues such as climate change, social justice, human rights, and technological ethics are at the forefront of young people's minds. They are looking for guidance on how to align their faith with their desire to engage with and improve the world they live in.

To begin with, the Church must foster open and honest dialogues. Creating a safe space where young people can express their doubts, ask tough questions, and discuss controversial topics is essential. These discussions can be facilitated through youth groups, workshops, or forums. It's important that the Church doesn't shy away from difficult conversations, whether it's about sexuality, mental health, social media ethics, or interfaith relations.

Another key aspect is contextualising biblical teachings in the modern context. While the core tenets of the Catholic faith are timeless, understanding how they apply to contemporary issues is vital. For instance, what does the Bible say about environmental stewardship, and how can that inform a Christian approach to climate change? How do the teachings of Christ inspire action towards social justice and equality? Providing insights into these questions can help young people see the relevance of their faith in today's world.

In addition, the Church can play a proactive role in educating the youth about social and ethical

issues from a faith-based perspective. This could involve incorporating modern issues into youth group sessions, offering educational programs, or providing resources that explore these topics through the lens of Catholic values. By doing so, the Church not only informs but also empowers young people to be informed, compassionate, and ethical participants in society.

Mentorship is also a powerful tool in this journey. Pope Francis talks a lot about 'accompaniment' and 'persons of reference.' Having role models within the Church who actively engage with modern challenges can inspire young people. These mentors can share their experiences of living out their faith in their personal and professional lives, providing tangible examples of how faith can guide one's actions in a complex world.

Moreover, the Church should encourage and support the active involvement of youth in social causes. Whether it's through community service, environmental initiatives, or social justice projects, active engagement allows young people to put their faith into action. This not only helps in making a positive impact on society but also deepens their understanding and commitment to their faith.

Lastly, embracing technology and contemporary forms of communication is crucial in reaching out to today's youth. Using social media, podcasts, and other digital platforms to discuss faith in the context of modern challenges can make the Church's teachings more accessible and relatable to young people.

In conclusion, guiding youth through the challenges of the modern world requires the Church to be both a steadfast beacon of timeless wisdom and a dynamic, responsive voice in current conversations. By bridging faith and modern issues, the Church can equip young people with the moral and ethical compass they need to navigate their lives, making their faith a living, breathing part of their daily experience in the world.

**David Pope** dip FD MBIFD

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# Big Sleep Out!

**O**n Friday 19th April, 27 students and staff from Cardinal Newman College, Preston took part in a big sleep out, to raise money and awareness for people living with homelessness.

Organised and run by the Newman Against Poverty group and the Equality and Diversity Team, the group spent the night ‘sleeping’ out in the College grounds. Supported by homelessness charity, Shelter, who came along to speak to our students about the work that the charity does and how our fundraising money would be spent. Shelter also talked about housing rights and the issues within the current law that they are campaigning to help change.

Our students arrived at 7.30pm, with their sleeping bags in tow, and after hearing from the representatives from Shelter, they took part in a range of activities relating to the pressures of affording to run a household, particularly with the current cost of living crisis.


They then spent the night under the stars

in our gorgeous, but freezing grounds and even woke up to frost after getting an average of just 3.5 hours sleep each.

Calista Mullin, Assistant Head of Law who helped to organise the event said: “The students who took part were amazing and a credit to the College. A massive thank you to Kelly Illingworth-Turner, Bernice Taylor, Georgia Wright, Emma Watts, Ashely Hurst, Ian Bruce and Andrew Salter for their support and making what could have been an extremely stressful experience, an overwhelmingly positive one. Despite this, I can say with certainty that all those who took part will have been grateful for their own beds on Saturday evening.”


Despite these challenges, all students who took part managed to stay outside for the entire night and raised a fantastic total of £1700, which is still growing as donations continue to come in.

If anyone wishes to continue to support the sleep out, the just giving link is still active: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/newmansleepout2024>




**Blessed Edward Bamber  
Catholic Multi Academy Trust**


There are places available for September 2024 at the following schools in Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Academy Trust, please contact the schools directly for further information.




Reception places at St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Great Eccleston.  
Please contact Mrs Jennifer Birch, Headteacher 01995 670364 or email [bursar@st-marysgreateccleston.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:bursar@st-marysgreateccleston.lancs.sch.uk)




Nursery and Reception places at St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Cleveleys.  
Please ring Mrs Lynsey Ankers, Headteacher 1253 852457 or email [admin@stteresasprimary.com](mailto:admin@stteresasprimary.com)




Nursery and Reception places at St William's Catholic Primary School, Pilling.  
Please contact Mrs Heather Hogarth, Headteacher 01253 790389 or email [head@st-williams.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-williams.lancs.sch.uk)



Nursery places available at St Wulstan's & St Edmund's Catholic Academy, Fleetwood. Please contact Miss Samantha Solloway, Headteacher 01253 874785 or email [enquiries@st-wulstans.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@st-wulstans.lancs.sch.uk)



**St. Mary's  
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**A Great Opportunity Awaits ....!**



## The Catholic Voice of Lancaster is looking for a new editor – are you that person?

**T**he Catholic Voice of Lancaster is looking for a new editor from the end of this calendar year. If you have a good standard of English grammar, good communication skills and a reasonable standard of IT then this role could be right up your street.

The Catholic Voice publishes 10 issues a year, there is no Paper in January or August. Typesetting and artwork are handled separately and our publisher Cath Com handle all advertising and printing issues and delivery to deanery centres each month. The Editor's role is to foster good links across the diocese to

ensure a steady flow of good news copy as well as commissioning more detailed articles as appropriate.

Additionally, items submitted for publication need to be checked to ensure there is nothing that runs contrary to the Catholic Faith, standards of grammar are maintained and articles are reported at an appropriate length to ensure maximum engagement across the regional areas of the diocese as well as age groups.

Clearly it is not possible to relay all the nuts and bolts of the role of the Editor

in such a short piece but the existing Editor is prepared to talk through the role in more detail on request and will provide full and robust training to ensure a smooth handover. If you have a bit of spare time each month, and would like to help the Church of Lancaster in this volunteer role please give this opportunity some serious consideration.

Interested? Then please don't delay contact the Editor: **Edwina Gillett**

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# Join Bishop Paul Swarbrick on a Spiritual Journey

*- Embark on pilgrimage this year*

As the Director of the Diocesan Shrine of Ladyewell Preston, I want to invite you to join our beloved Bishop Paul Swarbrick on a series of pilgrimages that he will embark on this year 2024. These spiritual journeys offer a unique opportunity for us to connect with our faith, as well as with the rich history and traditions of our Church.

**T**he first pilgrimage that Bishop Paul will lead is a trip to the renowned town of Lourdes. From July 23rd to July 30th, 2024, we will have the chance to immerse ourselves in the special atmosphere of this holy place. Lourdes is famously known as the site of the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Saint Bernadette, and it continues to be a source of healing, prayer, and miracles for countless pilgrims.

If you are a young person seeking to deepen your faith and explore your spirituality, we have a pilgrimage to Lourdes specifically tailored for you. The youth session will take place from July 22nd to August 1st, 2024. This is an incredible opportunity to not only connect with like-minded individuals but also to experience the transformative

power of faith in a youthful and vibrant setting.

We also have a pilgrimage to Walsingham, a place of significant importance in the Catholic faith. From September 2nd to September 6th, 2024, we will journey to the heart of England to visit the Walsingham Shrine. It is a highly esteemed pilgrimage site, and we are fortunate to have Rev. Fr. Robert Billing, one of our own priests, as the director of the Walsingham Shrine. If you would like to book a place on this pilgrimage, please contact Deacon Charlie Conner – email [charlie.conner@lrcd.org.uk](mailto:charlie.conner@lrcd.org.uk) or call **07895742732**.

Additionally, we have our very own Diocesan pilgrimage on September 21st, 2024, at our cherished Ladyewell Shrine in Preston. This pilgrimage holds

a special place in our hearts as it allows us to celebrate and honour our Lady in a meaningful way, right in our own community. This pilgrimage offers a chance for introspection, prayer, and renewal as we gather together to seek Mary's intercession.

But what exactly is a pilgrimage, and why is it so important for us to embark on one, particularly to a place where our Lady is honoured? At its core, pilgrimage represents a quest for divine connection or spiritual meaning. It entails embarking on a journey to a sacred place or destination, often associated with religious significance. However, pilgrimage is not confined to a specific religious act but is also relevant to seekers on a spiritual or personal level. A pilgrimage is not merely a physical journey; it is a spiritual quest that

nourishes our souls. It is an opportunity to step away from the distractions of daily life and focus on deepening our relationship with God. By visiting holy sites and engaging in sacred rituals, we are reminded of our humility, our dependence on a higher power, and our need for spiritual renewal.

The very essence of pilgrimage lies in the belief that travelling outwardly aids in exploring one's inner self. Stepping away from the routines and comforts of everyday life allows individuals to reflect upon their core beliefs, values, and aspirations. Unlike conventional tourism, pilgrimage involves a deliberate focus on introspection, self-discovery, and personal transformation. When we visit a pilgrimage site where our Lady is honoured, we are not only paying homage to her but also seeking her





intercession. As Catholics, we believe in the powerful role of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the mother of Jesus and the queen of heaven. By visiting a place of devotion to Mary, we demonstrate our love, trust, and faith in her maternal care. It is through her that we can draw closer to her son, Jesus, and experience a deeper connection to our faith.

Furthermore, pilgrimage provides a unique environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds congregate with a shared intention. Whether it is through group prayers, ritual practices, or ceremonial events, this sacred journey creates a sense of belonging and community spirit. Such interactions encourage dialogue, empathy, and a deeper understanding of human nature, fostering strong bonds amongst participants. Pilgrimage often involves

rigorous physical exertion, symbolizing the purification of the spirit. Rituals, prayers, or acts of devotion performed during the journey cleanse the soul of accumulated negativity, allowing for spiritual rejuvenation. Immersion in sacred spaces, whether natural or constructed, further facilitates a connection with a higher power and amplifies one's personal faith or beliefs.

Pilgrimage possesses an innate ability to heal emotional wounds and offer solace to those burdened by life's trials. The act of surrendering one's grief, seeking forgiveness, or placing trust in a higher power can be immensely cathartic.

The solitude and serenity of sacred sites provide a conducive environment for inner healing, promoting emotional well-being and a sense of closure.

Many pilgrimage sites are nestled amidst breathtaking natural landscapes, inviting pilgrims to connect with the world around them. This interaction with nature fosters a deep appreciation for the environment and encourages environmental stewardship. Pilgrims become more conscious of the interdependence between humans and their surroundings, nurturing a greater sense of responsibility towards the preservation of our planet.

Pilgrimage offers a wellspring of inspiration that transcends the duration of the journey itself. The memories, lessons, and connections formed during this sacred quest live on, influencing pilgrims long after they return home.

By immersing themselves in the stories and experiences of spiritual ancestors, pilgrims tap into a collective wisdom that

guides and motivates them to lead more meaningful lives.

Finally, in a fast-paced world often consumed by materialism and superficial desires, pilgrimage remains an essential. Therefore, I encourage each and every one of you to consider joining Bishop Paul on these pilgrimages in 2024. Whether you are seeking personal healing, spiritual rejuvenation, or simply a greater connection to your faith, these journeys have something profound to offer. As we embark on these sacred adventures together, let us open our hearts and minds to the transformative power of pilgrimage and the blessings that await us. *May God bless you abundantly on your pilgrimage.*

*Fr. Augustine Obiagwu, HFFBY Director,  
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# Westminster Hall Debate on Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia - A “missed opportunity” says Care Not Killing

Speaking ahead of a Westminster Hall Debate on assisted suicide and euthanasia, Dr Gordon Macdonald, CEO of Care Not Killing described it as a missed opportunity to talk about fixing the UK’s palliative and social care system.

He commented: “Changing the law would put pressure on the elderly, vulnerable and disabled people into ending their lives prematurely. This is what we see in the US State of Oregon, which has an assisted suicide system and where a majority of those ending their lives in 2023 cited the fear of being a burden on their families, carers or finances as a reason. While in Canada, which has a euthanasia system, 1,700 of those whose lives were ended cited loneliness as a reason in 2022. We have also seen the deeply troubling cases of Paralympians, army veterans and disabled people being offered ‘an assisted death’ rather than the support they need to live.

“Then there is the myth of the ‘Hollywood death’. Studies show those who ingest death row drugs as used in Oregon, far from having a quick and painless death, slowly drown in their own secretions and die of what doctors call a pulmonary oedema. “And this is before we get to the worrying data from the US and Europe that shows legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide, far from reducing the number of suicides seems to be associated with an increase in the numbers of people taking their own lives in the general population, perhaps because it normalises the idea and practice of suicide.”

Dr Macdonald concluded: “At a time when we have seen how fragile our health care system is, how the hospice movement has a £100 million black hole in its budget, and when up to one in four Brits who would benefit from palliative care but aren’t currently receiving it, holding yet another debate on whether or not the state should kill a small number of people compared to caring for the hundreds of thousands of people who are terminally or have chronic and degenerative conditions is a missed opportunity. Instead of discussing this dangerous and ideological policy, we should be talking about how to fix the UK’s broken and patchy palliative care system so everyone can have a dignified death – A view shared by the Health and Social Care Committee.”

For more info contact Alistair Thompson of Team Britannia PR on: **07970 162225** or by email: [alistair@teambritanniapr.com](mailto:alistair@teambritanniapr.com)

Care Not Killing is a UK-based alliance bringing together over 40 organisations - human rights and disability rights organisations, health care and palliative care groups, faith-based organisations groups - and thousands of concerned individuals. They have three key aims:

- to promote more and better palliative care;
- to ensure that existing laws against euthanasia and assisted suicide are not weakened or repealed;
- to inform public opinion further against any weakening of the law.



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# Fr John Heaney RIP



**R**equiem Mass at Holy Family Barrow on the feast of SS Philip and James – Dear Bishop Paul fellow clergy, and dear faithful people of Barrow, and beyond. All of us are gathered today to raise the soul of Father John Heaney by our prayerful offering of Mass for him; and also, to thank the good Lord for his life and ministry among us as a Christian and a Priest. I learned that John did not want any great anthem of praise in his honour at his funeral, and this sentiment is entirely consistent with the man he was. Nevertheless, we must do justice to a good and faithful priest, trying not to contravene his wish.

Since the Incarnation of the Son of God it is impossible to find disembodied grace, except in God alone. When it comes to us, God's grace is embodied in a human life and nature. Apostles like SS Philip and James, whom we celebrate today, spent their lives after the resurrection proclaiming the Gospel by word and example, and paid the ultimate price of martyrdom. Grace was incarnate in their lives, just as it was in the life of Fr John Heaney. Yes, we are imperfect creatures, but God's love can perfect our flawed nature, and then the possibilities are endless. As the late great Pope Benedict said of himself at his election, the Lord can use 'our insufficient instruments' to do his work. And did the Lord not say, *'whoever believes in me will do the same works as I do myself'?*

St John Eudes, the apostle of the Sacred Heart wrote that as members of Christ's mystical body, we can expect to see the Lord's life, death and resurrection played-out in our own Christian lives – his joys, sorrows, struggles and victories embodied in us. It is not difficult, therefore, to see a Christ-like pattern in Fr. John Heaney's life as a priest.

I am indebted to Dave Smith for the insights that follow. He and John were firm friends for many years. When you think of John, the film *'The Quiet Man'* comes to mind – it describes him well. Not that he was any John Wayne. His prominent characteristics were those of a reserved, courteous priest, even to the point of introspection. But this masked a deeply religious man of faith who was keenly aware of the everyday cares and burdens confronting the poor of Yahweh, the little ones of the world, to whom he dedicated his life in alleviating their sufferings with the Gospel message of hope.

In his own, undemonstrative way, John was truly a Servus Servorum Dei (*Servant of the Servants of God*), making it his priority to seek the rapport of what you might term of the 'ordinary person', who tries but does not always succeed in meeting the ideals of the Christian life. He could see beyond human frailty to the goodness hidden in people, made in the image and likeness of God, and therefore, worthy of the respect he always attempted to convey. Such descriptions of Fr John should not be taken as a pen picture of some remote ascetic cleric. He always remained a straightforward Barrow

lad at heart, quietly proud of his working-class roots. He would humorously recall his father driving the train at Caird's Iron Works (*now a supermarket*), and how during the Blitz, Hitler's bombers wreaked death and destruction on the docks, and much else in this wonderful town.

A stocky, well-built youth, he was athletic at football, representing Barrow School Boys while at the Grammar School. After secondary education, John attended the Slade School of Fine Arts, for a short period. His artistic abilities were reflected in a sensitivity to the beauty of creation, and humanity in the image and likeness of God.

Sensing God's call to the priesthood, he studied in Ireland, and was ordained priest here in Barrow at St Mary's on June the first, 1963. As curate he served in Preston, in Mirehouse, and in Egremont, and as Parish Priest at Claughton on Brock, and finally here at Holy Family from 1987 until his retirement in 2010. May his faithful housekeeper then cared for him, until recent times when Sister Catherine and her community in Burnley took over, tending him with great care in the last phase of his life.

And so, today we formally return him to the Lord. It is an 'a Dieu' literally – to God we return him – in the place where he celebrated Mass for all those years, and modelled his priesthood on the Lord's paschal mystery. The risen Lord went to prepare a room for him in his Father's house, and has now returned to take him with him.

We wish him a swift and happy purgatory that as the hymn says, *"O'ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven"* he will sing God's praises. St. Paul tells the Ephesians that we are *"God's work of art"*, and which artist doesn't cease working on his masterpiece until it is as perfect as can be?

Just before Advent, we read St Cyprian in the breviary, where he describes the home-coming of the weary pilgrim to heaven. He says, A great throng awaits us there of those dear to us – parents, brothers, sons, A packed and numerous throng longs for us...the apostles, the prophets, the holy virgins, the merciful, the almsgivers – all waiting. What joy they shall share with us when we come into their sight and embrace them, we think of Fr John's family here.

It is the end of this earth-bound life, and a new beginning. The words of T.S.Elliot come to mind, *"The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time."* Through our loving prayer, and this holy sacrifice of the Mass, may this be happening for Fr John Heaney, even now. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen. Our Lady, Mother of the Church, pray for him. St Philip and St. James pray for him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

*Canon John Watson*



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## JOHN BRADBURNE PILGRIMAGE WALK 2024

Saturday 8th June 2024

This year JBMS will be climbing Cross Fell. This is the highest mountain in England outside the Lake District. John Bradburne climbed and wrote about it many times in his poetry. The summit is just 8 miles from Skelwith where John was born and spent his early years.

We start at a local church, walk to Wythwaite then up Skelwith Hill to Whithwaite Farm and on to the summit where we stop for lunch and prayers. It takes about 2400 feet of ascent which will take approximately 4 hours. You will need to be fairly fit and dressed for a long walk with possibly a cold wind, even in June.

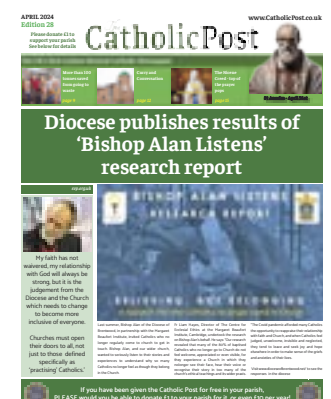
Before the walk, there will be a Mass held at St John the Evangelist Church, Skelwith, CA10 1HQ at 10am. All welcome to join the Mass.

There will be refreshments, talks and an exhibition on John Bradburne and the Whithwaite Laying Care Centre at the Skelwith Village Hall after the walk.

To book your place and make your donation please visit:  
[www.johnbradburnepilgrimage.co.uk](http://www.johnbradburnepilgrimage.co.uk) or call Kate on 01768 714336.

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## Fr Tom Forster RIP

**Requiem Mass for the late Fr Tom Foster was celebrated at Our Lady and St Joseph's, Carlisle on Thursday 2nd May 2024. The homily was delivered by Canon Alf Hayes.**

I will start with a direct quote from Fr Tom's Last Will and Testament. *"I hereby request and beseech that only the undermentioned biographical information (preferably less, but no more) shall be included in the homily at the Requiem Mass on the day of my funeral: Date and place of birth: Carlisle, 15th January 1929. Education: St Cuthbert's school and St Patrick's school, Carlisle. St Bernadine's, Buckingham. Campion House, Osterley and Ushaw College, Durham. Ordination: Our Lady and St Joseph, Carlisle 14th July 1957 Service: Parishes in the Diocese of Lancaster. Army Chaplain for 16 years. Secretary to Bishop of HM Forces. Secretary to the Bishop of Lancaster. I further request that the short homily at my Requiem Mass be given on the themes 'The Priesthood' and 'Christian Death', and that the one giving the homily begs forgiveness of all whom I have offended, and the prayers of all".*

When I read of Tom's request for a short homily, with very little of his life, it reminded me of the English Teacher who set her pupils a composition and told them that every good story contains the four essential parts – Religion, Royalty, Romance and Mystery. So off they went.

To her amazement one boy finished within two minutes. He'd written. "Good God", said the Princess. "I'm pregnant. Whodunnit?" It fulfilled the task but told you nothing. In a similar way, if all I had to do was write, 'Tom was born, he was ordained, he died', you could say I'd fulfilled my task, but not told you anything. However, that was Tom's wish, so I could finish now, except for the fact of his request for a few words on Priesthood and Christian Death.

With regards to priesthood, the first

scripture reading I have chosen is from Hebrews 7:23-28. It's about the perfection of Christ, the heavenly high priest. He is the ideal priest, holy, innocent, uncontaminated and beyond the influence of sinners. For all of us priests who are meant to be an 'Alter Christus', (another Christ), such an ideal is really hard to live up to, well-nigh impossible. So why do we bother? I suppose it all comes down to the fact that Jesus says, "Remember, you didn't choose me: I chose you, and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit which will last". When we priests think about those words, we might feel, "Well, why did you choose me? You knew fine well that I'd let you down, that I'd never reach those dizzy heights of perfection, and that I'm certainly not uncontaminated and beyond the influence of sinners".

But then, we realise that when it comes to choosing, Jesus has form, just like his Dad had in the Old Testament, choosing the most unlikely characters to fulfil his plan. I'm sure you all know that old story of Jesus seeking Management Consultancy advice, before choosing the apostles. The report which comes back is very negative. Matthew is known for shady dealing and keeping questionable company, James and John are explosive, Thomas questions everything, and Peter's mouth sounds off before his brain's engaged. In fact, the only one to show any business acumen at all is Judas.

But they were the first priests he chose – a bit rough and ready, some needing refining around the edges, others not too bright, but all willing to allow him to use them in God's service. That's the way Jesus does things. Think of St Paul, probably the greatest missionary ever, and yet plagued by his imperfections,

begging God to remove whatever weakness the thorn in his flesh was, only to be told by Jesus, that his grace is sufficient for him to get the job done.

So, that's why we bother. We know we're cut from the same cloth. We know Jesus needs priests, and we know he's not going to wait until we've reached perfection, before he chooses to use us in the service of God.

A large part of Tom's priestly service was as an Army Chaplain. When Tom left the Army, I was asked by Bishop Pearson to replace him. I remember him telling me tales of exotic postings in the Far East and places I'd only read about in Boy's Own War stories.

It sounded very adventurous, and, for a lot of the time, it was.

It was a very different way of being a priest. There were no regular congregations or routine days. It was very peripatetic. We became 'Massing Priests' covering great swathes of Germany, and always on the move, with new postings every couple of years or less. So, there was no continuity of Parish Life, as we know it in civilian life. For example, until I came to Fleetwood, I had never seen a child I'd baptised, start school at age 4 or 5.

It was a ministry of sowing seeds and praying for God to give the growth. However, there was often the joy of reaping the harvest of previous Chaplains' work.

When Tom first came back from the Army, he just couldn't settle, and I'm sure the restlessness of Army life probably had a lot to do with that.

And now a little on Christian death in general. I can't possibly improve on what Jesus says about it, in John's Gospel today 12:23-26. *"Unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains but a single grain: but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest".*

That says it all. We Christians believe death is not the end of all our hopes and dreams, but very much the beginning of something far more wonderful. As Bishop Paul is wont to say: *"The best is yet to come!"* When it comes to the Christian death of a particular individual, that promise is still very true, but in a much more personal way because of our individual relationship with Christ.

Later in that gospel passage, Jesus says, *"If a man serves me, he must follow me"*, a command applicable to all Christians, especially priests. As I mentioned earlier, we priests don't always get it right. I think, from what Tom said in his will, asking forgiveness from anyone he may have hurt in life, he was aware that he was not perfect. I've put something similar in my own will. I imagine many priests may feel the same about the mistakes they have made.

That's why in every Requiem Mass we always include prayers asking forgiveness for any sins the deceased may have committed, but we do it with absolute confidence in God's mercy, especially for someone who has given his whole life, and in Tom's case, a very long life, to serve and follow Christ.

And the reason for our confidence? It's in that last line in today's gospel: *"If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him"*. This, then, is our confident hope for Tom from our Loving Father.

*May he now rest in peace.*



# 100 years of Priestly Service

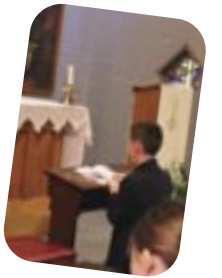
Canon Peter Hart of Our Lady's Star of the Sea and Fr Patrick Hibbert of St Alban's each celebrated 50 years of priesthood in May. The *Catholic Voice* thanks them both for their local service and sends them both our prayers and best wishes.







# In the Bishop's pastoral care



**O**n Tuesday 23rd April 2024, the Rt Rev. Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster, visited St. Bede's Catholic High School, for a pastoral visit. Bishop Paul wrote to us in October to reassure us of his support and prayers at a time when our community was mourning the tragic passing of a well-loved pupil. Our community were reassured by the Bishop's pastoral care and consideration.

We felt that the Bishop truly accompanied us in prayer and we were very consoled by the wise and reflective contents of his letter. In light of his letter, our Headteacher Mr. Marsden, supported by Father John Millar (*our priest chaplain*), invited Bishop Paul and Father Michael Docherty, Episcopal Vicar for Education, to visit us.

At the start of the academic year at St. Bede's, we had set out school priorities with the intention of further improving 'behaviour, engagement, devotion and excellence'. These words formed our 'Bede Acronym' and typified all that we stand for here in this school.

A key part of further developing the devotion aspect of life at St. Bede's has been the establishment of the Society of St. Joseph. The Society of St. Joseph are a pupil leadership group who were successfully appointed to be representatives of the Catholic life of our school. These pupils attend weekly Mass before school, they voluntarily lead our start of lesson prayers and regularly pray the Holy Rosary. Ultimately, there pupils have a mandate from Christ and are given the responsibility to be 'salt, light and leaven' and fill the school with goodness and prayer.

After meeting our Headteacher, Chair of Governors and representatives from our governing body, Bishop Paul joined the Society of St. Joseph, Mrs. Gili-Ross (*Headteacher of St. Peter's Primary School*) and pupils from St. Peter's, to pray the Holy Rosary. Bishop Paul led us in the opening prayers and the first decade, whilst kneeling at the prie-dieu at the front of the chapel. Pupil representatives from the Society of St. Joseph followed suit, by leading each decade of the Rosary, kneeling reverently before the altar. Our Bishop and Episcopal Vicars remained kneeling throughout the Rosary before rising for the Salve Regina, sung in Latin, led by Mr Warrington our Head of Music. The pupils then prayed the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary before humbly receiving an episcopal blessing.

Following the conclusion of the Rosary, Bishop Paul met with a group of pupils who had prepared questions for him. Some very insightful discussions arose from this meeting and the pupils

enjoyed finding out about the Bishop's vocation. The pupils spoke openly about their experience at school and life as young people in the modern age. Mrs Cuthbertson, our Head of Religious Education, supported the pupils with the formulation of the questions.

In keeping with the previous activity, Bishop Paul was led on a learning tour of the school by Mrs. Smith, Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning. This enabled the Bishop to visit a variety of lessons, including RE, Science, Drama and PE. Bishop Paul was very keen to listen to the pupils and find out more about their experiences. During the tour, Mrs. Smith outlined our very ambitious curriculum intent which is predicated on enabling pupils to discover truth, develop goodness and appreciate beauty in all of their learning. Following a short break to pray the Angelus at midday, the Bishop met with staff and governors for lunch. A range of staff, with varying responsibilities and lengths of service, met with the Bishop and discussed their experience working in Catholic education at St. Bede's.

After lunch, the Bishop attended an assembly with our year eleven pupils. This assembly was led by Mr. Langley, Head of Pupil Behaviour and Mr. Marsden, Headteacher. In addition to this, the assembly was supporting by our Head Boy, Head Girl and their deputies. The pupil leaders read readings from Deuteronomy and St Paul's letter to the Colossians. The readings were lovingly prepared with the theme of 'going forth'.

This was appropriate as the pupils are about to embark upon their examinations prior to leaving us at St. Bede's. Bishop Paul spoke to them about the parable of the treasure found in the field and encouraged them to remember the experience of the faith they have had at our school. He also commended the pupils for engaging with the very bold and passionately Catholic vision of the Headteacher and senior leaders at St. Bede's. The Bishop blessed the pupils, their teachers and the wider school community before the school hymn was sung. Our Headteacher expressed his gratitude to the parents who joined us for the assembly and the governors who were present with us throughout the day.

Bishop Paul very generously remained behind to take photos with the pupil leadership team, staff leaders and the Society of St. Joseph. Before his departure, the pupils presented Bishop Paul with flowers and a custom-made wine case which had been created by colleagues of our technology department.

*Reuben Gabrasadig, Deputy Headteacher*



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# Catholic Charities Unite for Election Year Campaign

A Year of Encounter

USING OUR CATHOLIC VOICE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

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Empower and Inspire  
Turning Concern into Action

CAFOD Catholic Agency for Overseas Development

The St Vincent de Paul Society, in partnership with CAFOD, have come together to encourage Catholics across the country to engage with their local candidates ahead of the next general election.

A Year of Encounter is a joint initiative by the two faith charities which aims to inspire supporters to reach out to their local candidates to help advocate for to tackle domestic and global poverty issues including the cost-of-living crisis, offering a warm welcome and compassion to people seeking asylum, as well as tackling regional inequalities.

Tackling domestic and global poverty is a main priority for both charities, something which the SVP and CAFOD advocate for through their social justice work.

*“We’re hoping that our joint initiative will strengthen community participation and be the foundation for starting to build strong community links through local faith groups,” explains Policy and Public Affairs Manager at the SVP, Alessandra Sciarra.*

*“This is great way to encourage the Catholic community in England and Wales to reach out to their local candidates. Together we hope our guide will give people the tools to find out issues in their local areas for themselves and start building their own relationships so they can make their own choice when it comes to voting in the next General Election later this year.”*

This year marks the 180th anniversary of the SVP, which will be a year-long celebration of the work the society has done in that time of tackling poverty in all its forms and supporting people most in need.

There are currently 2 free online training sessions which will offer a step-by-step process of how your parish can engage with your local candidates in simple ways. Both event details can be found here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/svp-and-cafod-78655520313>

More information can be found about A Year of Encounter by visiting:

<https://svp.org.uk/encounter>

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