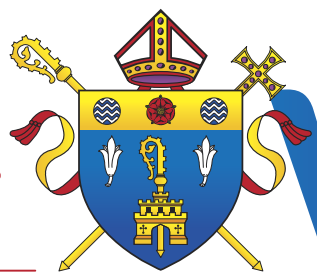


FREE

The
Catholic



VOICE *of Lancaster*

*The Official Newspaper to
the Diocese of Lancaster*

Issue 361 + July '24

INSIDE:
pg8 *A Pattern of Many Parts:
Celebrating the Centenary
of our Diocese*



General Election 2024

As this edition of the *Catholic Voice* is distributed in your Parish we shall be within days of the General Election called by the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak some 5-6 weeks ago.

Some people will have already made up their mind who to vote for, some not and some may be just feeling why bother. But the *Catholic Voice* would encourage all those with a vote to use it. But who to vote for? As Catholics we should be cognisant of our beliefs and seek assurances from prospective candidates on supporting the Common Good. In particular find out where your candidates stand on 'life' issues. The threat of abortion being decriminalised was averted in this Parliament but will soon return in the next. A big push to legalise assisted suicide is also expected. It is therefore vital that pro-life people use their vote to elect pro-life MPs.

In addition, it is important to find out where your candidates stand on the environment, the marginalised, Catholic education and the promotion of peace across the world.

We are called to be the Good Samaritans and peacemakers in this world and it is to these tenets of our faith that we should align our X on the 4 July.

“
You want to know what your candidate will think and say on your behalf when that candidate gets into Parliament. I would like to put forward a theme for us all to think about. How do we seek to construct a society in which families can flourish? That's the bedrock.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols **”**

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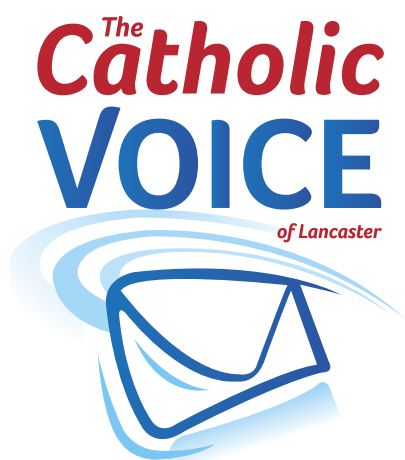
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Innovative new project aiming to reach those in most remote areas of Cumbria

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED – This new operation, set up by the St Vincent de Paul (SVP) Society (England and Wales), will use a converted and accessible van to provide vital services to those who cannot make it to one of the charity's centres.

Across England and Wales, the SVP is home to 11 Community Support Projects (CSPs) which are each unique to the area by offering tailored support and services which reflect that of the local community.

A new model has been identified within the charity to offer these services to people who are based in remote areas or struggling with transport to get to support.

Volunteers are currently needed to help with the day-to-day operation of the van as it drives across Cumbria to make the SVP's services accessible.

"All of our Community Support Projects are unique in what they offer across the country, and we want to extend that model so even those who cannot make it to one will still have access to our

services," explains Head of Centre Development at the SVP Sheena Eastwood.

"We are yet to decide exactly what services would be on offer in this new project, and we're currently undertaking extensive research within the most deprived areas of Cumbria to identify what help local people need the most.

"Currently we're looking for volunteers who could meet our driver and jump on the bus to help assist in offering support to those who will be visiting, whether this is signposting to advice, with education, food, clothing, or just someone to talk to."

Anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer can get in touch with Sheena directly on **SheenaE@svp.org.uk** or by calling **07814 553027**.

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) was established in England and Wales in 1844 and is part of a large and thriving Christian voluntary movement dedicated to tackling poverty in all its forms by providing practical assistance to people in need in 153 countries.

Our core value is one of service and we treat each person as a unique individual deserving of dignity and respect. Person-to-person contact is therefore at the heart of our work and spending time with people is our greatest gift. We offer

non-judgemental support to anyone in need, regardless of faith, race, gender, sexual orientation, background or circumstances.

Our 870 local groups comprise 8,600 trained volunteer members who visit vulnerable or isolated people and offer them sincere friendship and practical support. In ten areas of the country our work has evolved into vibrant local community support centres which respond to local needs and offer a warm welcome to everyone.

Celebrating The Season of Creation 2024

“To hope and act with Creation”

The Season of Creation runs from 1 September until 4 October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. It is a time of ecumenical celebration when we reflect on God's generosity in giving us our beautiful world and we are inspired to protect it.

Modern media have given us an unrivalled opportunity to see the huge diversity of landscapes, flora and fauna on the planet but, equally, they have shown us the devastation that has occurred when we have taken it for granted.

This year's theme for The Season of Creation is *“To hope and act with Creation”*. It is inspired by Romans 8:19-25. This biblical image pictures the earth as a mother groaning as in childbirth.

Saint Francis of Assisi understood this when he referred to the earth as our sister and our mother in his Canticle. Today, we no longer see the earth as a gift from our Creator, but rather as a resource to be used. *“Creation is groaning”* (Rom 8:22) because of our selfishness and our unsustainable actions that harm her. Along with our sister, Mother Earth, creatures of all kinds, including humans, cry out because of our destructive actions causing a climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, and human suffering.

We have celebrated Creation in my own parish for the last four years. It has always been joyful and inspiring and brings home to parishioners the simple idea that we protect what we value and we value what we experience. If we never celebrate the natural world, what hope do we have of protecting it?

We need to prepare now if we are to celebrate the season properly and not to suddenly realise that we have been overtaken by the summer holidays! Let us think about how we might celebrate both in our own churches and with the other Christians in our neighbourhood.

In our own churches, we could have a Creation

weekend when our Masses have the theme of caring for Our Common Home. When thinking of decoration, the fruits of the harvest have their place, but it is much more than a simple harvest celebration. Let's not forget the mosses and the ferns. Let us display pictures of fish, and invertebrates such as bugs, beetles, bees, butterflies and spiders - all part of God's wonderful web of life.

A friend said *“We have a Christmas Crib, an Easter Garden, so why not have a Bug Hotel to celebrate Creation?”*

The Season provides a great opportunity to grow our community by engaging with our parishioners, schools and perhaps with those who use our parish facilities. We might have a picnic, a soup lunch or other simple meal; an art or photographic exhibition celebrating all that is wonderful in our local area. Maybe a family fun night celebrating the individual actions that we already take. Such an evening might include a meat-free meal, an environmental quiz and some folk songs with sing-along choruses to remind us a way of life that was more at one with nature.

It should not be a one-off celebration, but a turning point in our relationship with our planet and all the species, including ourselves, who depend on it. We could invite individuals or groups to make pledges, for instance. An individual or a family might pledge to reduce the amount of meat they eat, walk to church or take a bus instead of the car.

A parish or school might register for the CAFOD Live Simply award, hold a tree planting or commit to having only reusable utensils at parish events. These are just some ideas. All of our parishes and schools are rich in talent. May we use the Season of Creation to release our own creativity.

For more information, search Season of creation 2024. *Stephen Garsed (Our Lady & St Edward's, Preston) Environmental Justice Lead, Diocese of Lancaster*

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As I write the rain is pouring down and the summer seems to have forgotten Keswick. We're hoping the weather picks up in time for our Summer Retreat – report to follow next time!

At this time of year, we reflect on the people we are losing in the summer, and it's always with a tinge of sadness!!

Kylie McKenna will be leaving us after two years as a leader and our interns, Felix, Veva and Veronica will also be heading off to take up the next challenge. We also said goodbye to Charlotte at Easter. We've got a good crop joining us in August though. We have a new leader to replace Kylie and four new interns so far with a few more hopefully in the pipeline!

The new team members will be formally commissioned by Bishop Paul at our

Open day on September 15th. Talking of which...

Have you put 15 September in your diary yet?

As we've mentioned before, 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, celebrated by Bishop Paul.

15 September Castlerigg Manor, 12pm Start with 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 information contact jack@castleriggmanor.co.uk or check out our website – castleriggmanor.com - or our Instagram channels [@castleriggmanor](https://www.instagram.com/castleriggmanor) and [@team_castlerigg](https://www.instagram.com/team_castlerigg)

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?

Catholic Students Retreat // November 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 // December 13-15 //
The next open retreat after the summer retreat will be the Advent Retreat in mid December. Bookings open in September.



One thing we are often asked in the Youth Service, is how youth leaders can develop themselves. In any field it's important to invest in ourselves, so how can we ask youth leaders sharpen the sword..?

In the dynamic landscape of church ministry, the personal development of youth leaders is as crucial as the spiritual guidance they offer. Leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the faith journey of young people, making their continuous growth and development vital not only for themselves but also for the communities they serve.

The first cornerstone of personal development is spiritual growth. As youth leaders, deepening one's own faith is essential. This can be achieved through regular prayer, meditation, and study of scripture, and of course regular reception of the sacraments. The treasury of Catholic prayers and devotions (*rosary, Adoration...*) can also be incredibly helpful. Attending retreats, workshops, and conferences focused on spiritual development can also provide new insights and inspiration. A strong spiritual foundation enables leaders to guide others more effectively and authentically.

Emotional intelligence is another key area for development. Working with young people often involves navigating complex emotional landscapes. Youth leaders should cultivate skills like empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution. Understanding and managing one's own emotions is also crucial, as it influences how one interacts with and supports others. Training sessions or courses in counselling and psychology can be incredibly beneficial in this regard.

Professional skills are equally important. This includes effective communication, organization, and leadership skills. Being able to plan, execute, and evaluate youth activities efficiently is crucial. Moreover, the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively can help in delivering messages that resonate with young people. Leaders can enhance these skills through various leadership and management training programs.

At Castlerigg, we use the 'Working Genius' model and the Myers-Briggs Personality Type framework to help us work better as a team. Another key part of personal development.

Adaptability and innovation are necessary in today's fast-paced world. Youth leaders should be open to new ideas and approaches, whether it's in incorporating technology into ministry or exploring contemporary methods of youth engagement. Staying informed about the latest trends and challenges that affect young people can help leaders remain relevant and responsive.

Networking and community building are also vital. Connecting with other youth leaders, both within and outside the church, can provide a valuable exchange of ideas and experiences. These relationships can lead to collaborative projects, support systems, and a broader perspective on youth ministry.

Personal well-being should not be overlooked. The demands of ministry can be taxing, and it's important for leaders to take care of their physical, mental, and emotional health. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, adequate rest, and hobbies outside of ministry can contribute to overall well-being. Setting boundaries and practicing self-care are essential to prevent burnout.

Finally, ongoing education is key, and one which we've touched on already. Sort of. This might involve formal education, such as theology or youth ministry courses, or informal learning through books, podcasts, and webinars. The field of youth ministry is constantly evolving, and staying educated ensures that leaders can offer the most current and effective guidance.

'Open Learn' is a collection of free courses from the Open University. There are usually short courses about new technologies and innovations which can be extremely helpful.

In conclusion, the personal development of youth leaders in church ministry is a multifaceted journey that encompasses spiritual, emotional, professional, and personal growth. By investing in their own development, leaders are better equipped to inspire, guide, and support the young people they serve.

This commitment to growth not only enriches their own lives but also has a profound impact on their ability to foster a vibrant and nurturing spiritual environment for the youth in their care.

Personal Development for Youth Leaders in Church Ministry

David Pope dip FD MBIFD

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SEA SUNDAY 14 July

- Let us remember seafarers facing conflict, abandonment and tough times

“Some of the seafarers I meet have travelled through the conflict area of the Red Sea, with its risks of attacks from Houthis, then have sailed on to the Black Sea with its own dangers, given there is no agreement on maritime safety,” says Stella Maris’ Odesa port chaplain Fr Alex Smerechynskyy in Ukraine.

As a result of the conflict in Gaza, ships sailing through the Red Sea face the threat of Houthi missiles, drone attacks and raiding parties. Since last November, the Houthis have targeted more than 80 merchant vessels.

Ships bound for Ukraine are now regarded by Russia as potential carriers of military cargo, making them legitimate targets. This follows the collapse of the UN Black Sea grain initiative to create a safe corridor for ships carrying Ukrainian food and fertilizer.

Catholic charity Stella Maris (*formerly called Apostleship of the Sea*) is one of the few maritime charities with chaplains based in Ukraine. They carry out ship visits from the southern port city of Odesa. Here they work with seafarers on the frontline, witnessing the impact it is having on them.

Many shipowners are not allowing crew members to go ashore during their time in Odesa, for security reasons. So visits on board ships by the Stella Maris team there are proving increasingly important in countering the isolation and loneliness that seafarers often experience.

“Seafarers have signed on knowing the risks and receive additional pay as a result, but there is no respite for them and that has an effect,” says Fr Alex. “Once here in Odesa they can witness the drone attacks on the port and the city at close hand. This only adds to their stress and anxiety.”

Being a seafarer is a tough job at the best of times. You are away from home for months, you work long hours, and you face possible accidents at sea. But ships being hit by bombs or missiles is an additional problem facing seafarers currently – and not the only one. There is now an alarming rise in cases of seafarers abandoned by shipowners: left in distant ports without money, support, or the means to get home.

Deacon Joe O’Donnell, Stella Maris’ Senior Area Port Chaplain for Scotland helped an Indian crew recently. They had not received their wages for several months and were abandoned in Troon

in south-west Scotland. “We supplied groceries, clothing, and free mobile phone SIM cards so they could talk to their families back home,” he said.

“The crew were also under a huge mental strain, with no money, no means of getting home and absolutely no idea what their future is. So, we offered them pastoral support and reassurance. Following our intervention, the crew was paid and returned home.”

What happens on global shipping routes affects us all because much of the food and other products in our shops arrive on ships. That is everything from fish and fruit to computers and cars. We rely on seafarers and fishers perhaps more than we realise.

This year’s Gospel for Sea Sunday (*Mark 6: 7-13*) emphasises the importance of service and hospitality for strangers as a sign of Christ’s love. In this reading, Jesus instructed the disciples to take almost nothing with them – so they had to rely on the providence of God on their travels – and the generosity of the people they would stay with on the journey. Those people would be strangers to them – but the disciples were reliant on their hospitality.

When seafarers arrive in a foreign port, they are strangers, often thousands of miles from home. Stella Maris’ chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome them, listen to their concerns, and help provide what they need. The Stella Maris teams answer Jesus’ call to give hospitality to the stranger. They put their faith into action.

On Sea Sunday let us pray for seafarers, fishers, and the work of Stella Maris. Let us remember especially those seafarers who are sailing through conflict zones and those who have been abandoned in distant lands.

To find out more about Sea Sunday, please visit: <https://stellamaris.org.uk/seasunday/>
To donate to Stella Maris, please go to: <https://stellamaris.org.uk/donate/>

Greg Watts



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Where there is a Will...



Gifts in Wills are vital for the future of charities like ours.

Jonathan Heard, Stella Maris

Representatives from 25 Catholic charities gathered together in May to recognise a decade of collaboration to promote legacy giving. The meeting, at Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in London, marked 10 years since the official launch event of Your Catholic Legacy (YCL), which was formed to encourage Catholics to leave a gift in their Will to Catholic causes.

Each year, Your Catholic Legacy runs legacy campaigns – which have inspired amazing generosity. “Over the past decade we’ve seen many, many people choose to remember their favourite Catholic causes in their Will,” said YCL project manager Christine Reidy. “We took time during our meeting to give thanks for those people and their overwhelming generosity.”

In the beautiful surroundings of Eccleston Square, where the meeting venue was offered free to Your Catholic Legacy for the day, members spent time networking, sharing expertise and training. Charities including Aid to the Church in Need, CAFOD, HCPT, Missio and Jesuits in Britain were all represented.

Jonathan Heard, YCL Chairman who works for member charity Stella Maris, said, “It’s not often you find this many organisations collaborating together, so we’re proud of our unity, our longstanding alliance and our ability to learn from one another.” He added, “Gifts in Wills are vital for the future of charities like ours. They have the potential to transform organisations, enabling life-changing work among more people, for generations to come. We are so grateful for everyone who has remembered a Catholic cause in their Will.”

Find out more at: yourcatholiclegacy.org.uk The Catholic Voice urges you not to forget your own parish too when making your Will.



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A Pattern of Many Parts: *Celebrating the Centenary of our Diocese*

Last year I received a phone call from the Vicar General on behalf of the Group meeting to plan the Diocese's Centenary Jubilee which begins later this year.

They asked if I could organise a logo for them and suggested that I ask schools to come up with ideas which they duly did. What immediately became clear from this effort is that our Diocese is a very diverse entity and something that represented the towns and cities didn't necessarily reflect the large areas of rural landscape that our diocese comprises.

Similarly, that which represents Lancashire certainly doesn't necessarily reflect Cumbria, and Westmorland is different again, and please don't forget the differences between Preston and Blackpool, or those between Whitehaven and Workington. This beautiful diocese of our's is truly a mosaic of peoples and places.

The diversity of our Diocese of course left the problem of finding an emblem or image that would somehow encapsulate the whole of our Diocese and its Centenary. Asking for a little bit more guidance, I asked the Bishop for a quotation from the Scriptures which might provide a steer to the various designs that were beginning to appear.

After going on retreat, the Bishop returned with the text: *'The Lord's is the earth and its fulness, the world and all its peoples' (Ps. 23:1)*. It didn't exactly narrow it down; quite the opposite. The text speaks of fulness and plenitude of God.

By this time, the months were passing

by, and I mentioned the predicament to Paddie Denton who was a Team Leader at our diocesan youth retreat centre at Castlerigg Manor. *'Leave it with me'*, he chirped, as he disappeared into the ethereal world of graphic design. After much cogitation, the logo began to emerge, and whilst it is marked by simplicity, it is also many-layered, drawing many themes of our diocese together, and whilst it has a certain Pugin-esque traditional pattern to it, it is also very contemporary in its feel. I think that after working for several years in our Diocese with all its schools Paddie had intuited the different dimensions of our beloved Diocese and the need to express what made our Diocese distinctive.

Let me explain some of the symbolism and you may also be able to find meanings which Paddie hasn't considered and which I have yet to see. That is the whole point of a logo; it is like a diamond that glistens with meanings, resonating with people in different ways and at different times. By the way, you don't need to *'like'* the logo, it may not be your cup of tea (*and that's fine*) but it's meant to be something instantly recognisable and provoke an emotional response.

We live in a highly visual world these days and a good logo should catch our attention and point to what is beyond it. So, first and foremost, the letter 'C'. Why C? C stands for Centenary which means One Hundred, the one hundred years of our diocese's existence. It also happens to be the Latin numeral for One Hundred, Centum.

The next thing is to point out to you is the tapestry design of the logo, a pattern of

many parts representing the landscape of our Diocese. You can see the *'Red Rose'* of Lancaster, the heraldic badge of the region which dates back to the fourteenth century and which proudly adorns our diocesan crest. Next, and lesser known perhaps, is the white flower – NOT the Yorkshire White Rose – but the Grass of Parnassus flower, which since the 1950s has been adopted on the flag and coat of arms of Cumbria. The two flowers represent the people of the north and the south of the Diocese.

Besides the Rose and Grass of Parnassus flower, there are small circles containing waves of water. This is taken directly from the Diocesan coat of arms and represents the Ribble Estuary and Fylde Coast, Morecambe Bay, the West Cumbrian coastline and Solway Firth, and reminds us of the way in which the seas envelope many of our major towns and cities of our diocese. Water has a deeper resonance for us as Catholics since we are bathed in the Springs of Living Waters in our Baptism, and the waters of baptism become the source of our life and mission as Christians.

Finally, the intercalating pattern of blue and green stars and cross bring winding together the fells and moors, the rivers and lakes, the entirety of the landscapes, that define our region. Into this pattern we can discern Our Lady (*Star of the Sea*) and our Lord Jesus Christ (*represented by the Cross*). It is this background that picks up on the Bishop's Scriptural text:

we see in the beauty of the people and world around us so much of God's beauty who continues to bless us with riches and resources.

Paddie Denton writes that his hope is that *'this piece of Scripture which the logo evokes will remind us as a Diocese to express gratitude and jubilation for the last hundred years and all that God has given to our great diocesan family, and also to inspire us to seek out ways in which the Lord will continue to bless us: Lord, how am I to bring your fulness to the earth, and to all your peoples in the world?'*

It is hoped that over this year the logo for our diocesan centenary jubilee will be used across the Diocese in our diocesan communications, on social media and websites, letterheads, spread through the agency of the Bishop's Office, the Education Service, the Youth Service, the Faith & Justice Commission, and through our own parishes.

A suite of logos will be sent to each parish and the Centenary Logo can be simply married up with existing logos for the period of the Diocese's centenary. Someone more enterprising myself may even consider merchandising the logo to create Jubilee mugs or stationery or tote bags, surely collector's pieces.

Finally, there will be a prayer cards produced with a beautiful prayer composed by Canon John Watson for the occasion of the Jubilee. It is hoped that from the Solemnity of the Assumption (15 August) there will be a lead-in time of prayer and parishes will be encouraged to pray the prayer at the end of each Mass and each day in their homes. Prayer will rise up across the Diocese and spreading out throughout the world until such a time as the we can all say together: *The Lord's is the earth and its fulness; the world and all its peoples.* *Fr. Philip Conner*



Diocese of Lancaster Centenary Prayer

God our Father, we thank you for all the graces and blessings You have bestowed on our Diocese since its foundation one hundred years ago on ground made fertile by the blood of the martyrs.

Nourished by your Son, Jesus Christ, in Word and Sacraments, and led by your Holy Spirit, may we move forward with hope and trust, helping future generations to discover the “pearl of great price” which will bring them eternal life.

And when time shall be no more, may our Diocese rejoice as the “mother of countless children,” and be given her place in heavenly glory.

This we ask of you who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen


Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

St. Cuthbert, pray for us.

Holy Martyrs of our Diocese, pray for us.




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Catenian Tom Carter of Our Lady Star of the Sea recently celebrated his 100th birthday with family, parishioners and brother Catenians of the Lytham St Annes Circle of the Catenians Association

Sadly, shortly before his birthday, Tom had a fall. Prior to this he never missed attending Sunday Mass and Catenian meetings and celebrations. Despite being in hospital for his birthday, Tom managed to get a “pass” to attend his celebration in the Parish Centre of OLSS. The celebration was attended by numerous family and friends including his three children, Damian, Bernadette and Paul, his ten treasured grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews and a great great-nephew. Guests travelled from all over the world including, USA, Dubai, France, Portugal and Scotland.

The celebration was started by the Town Crier proclaiming his birthday, followed by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire showing his birthday card from the King. Then a detachment from RAF Leeming, a World War II bomber base presented Tom with a RAF Ensign and photographs of a Lancaster bomber. Tom had flown in Lancasters during and after the war. Nieces and nephews had also acquired a signed Preston North End football shirt with the logo “Uncle Tom 100”. This was followed by Canon Peter Hart presenting Tom with a Papal Blessing on behalf of the Parish.

Tom received so many cards - many from colleagues and past pupils. Tom was born in Thornton and attended Sacred Heart and St Joseph’s schools. In 1941 he began to train as a teacher at St Mary’s in Twickenham. He went on to become headteacher of St Thomas of Canterbury School in Rainham, Kent. The letters and cards received from former colleagues and past pupils clearly show that he truly was an inspirational and dearly loved headteacher.

The celebration continued with a slide show chronicling his remarkable life story. This showed what everyone gathered there already knew - Tom Carter is an amazing gentleman, a legend in his own lifetime and deservedly treasured by so many.

In their turn, the Catenians presented him with a Mass Bouquet and a signed scroll by the GB National President in recognition of this latest achievement. Tom had recently received a scroll on achieving sixty years in the Association.

Congratulations Tom Carter - it is an honour to be part of your life!
Robert Thompson

Mgr Slattery Celebrates 70 Years



Mgr Frank Slattery celebrated 70yrs of priestly ministry with a Mass at Christ the King in Milnthorpe at which he renewed his priestly vows and delivered a homily evoking his own life journey and all the different missions he had undertaken and experienced during his priestly life. Bishop Paul Swarbrick and other priests were in attendance as well as many family friends.

After Mass everyone retired to the Crooklands Hotel for a celebratory meal.



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Fr Alf Parker Celebrates his Diamond Jubilee



Fr Alf Parker celebrated 60 years of priestly ministry with Mass at St Charles Grange -over -Sands followed by a buffet. In his Homily Fr Alf said *"It is not about what you can do for God but about doing what job God has given you to do..."*

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Lancaster Seminarian commissioned as Lector in Rome

Christopher Sumner a 1st year Seminarian at the Beda College in Rome has recently been commissioned as Lector, Proclaimer of the Word of God, in a special ceremony held in the Collage's Chapel.

The college is named after the great English Saint, Bede, and was founded in the 19th century and it is the responsibility of the Bishops of England and Wales.

Students come from the English-speaking world and is for men of mature years (*that is those who have had first careers*) and their period of study and formation is four years.

(Right) 1st year students in the Chapel at the Beda College holding their newly presented Bibles.

(Below right) – Christopher Sumner flanked by fellow Lancaster Seminarians left Stephen Bamber 2nd year student and right Deacon Mr Simon Marley who will be ordained to the priesthood later this year by Bishop Paul Swarbrick.



St Joseph's Lancaster Altar Server Matas was recently confirmed by Bishop Paul at the Cathedral. Here he is pictured with Bishop Paul and his sponsor Deacon Stephen Pendlebury.



Spring Summit: *To be disciples and to make disciples*

Not sure what to expect, a coachload of parishioners from Christ the Good Shepherd Parish in Workington set out for Hyning Monastery early on the Feast of the English Martyrs, a propitious since the day had a focus on discipleship: what it means to be one and how we can make more.

Led by our Parish Priest, Fr Philip Conner, we prayed the Rosary on the coach, placing the day under the patronage of Mary who, as Pope St. Paul VI taught, is the first and most perfect of Christ's disciples. The day included presentations

by Fr Philip and a team of lay speakers drawn from our parish; testimonies from several lay people, including two received into the Church this Easter; group discussion and time for prayer and worship. Powerful points were made by our speakers.

Discipleship is a calling, the baseline and core substance of all Christian vocation. It also brings the joy and privilege of being called friends by Jesus (John 15:15). We were shown an image of Noah's ark which had been drawn by Fr Philip for a previous parish vision-setting session. It showed stylised figures, drawn so that they could

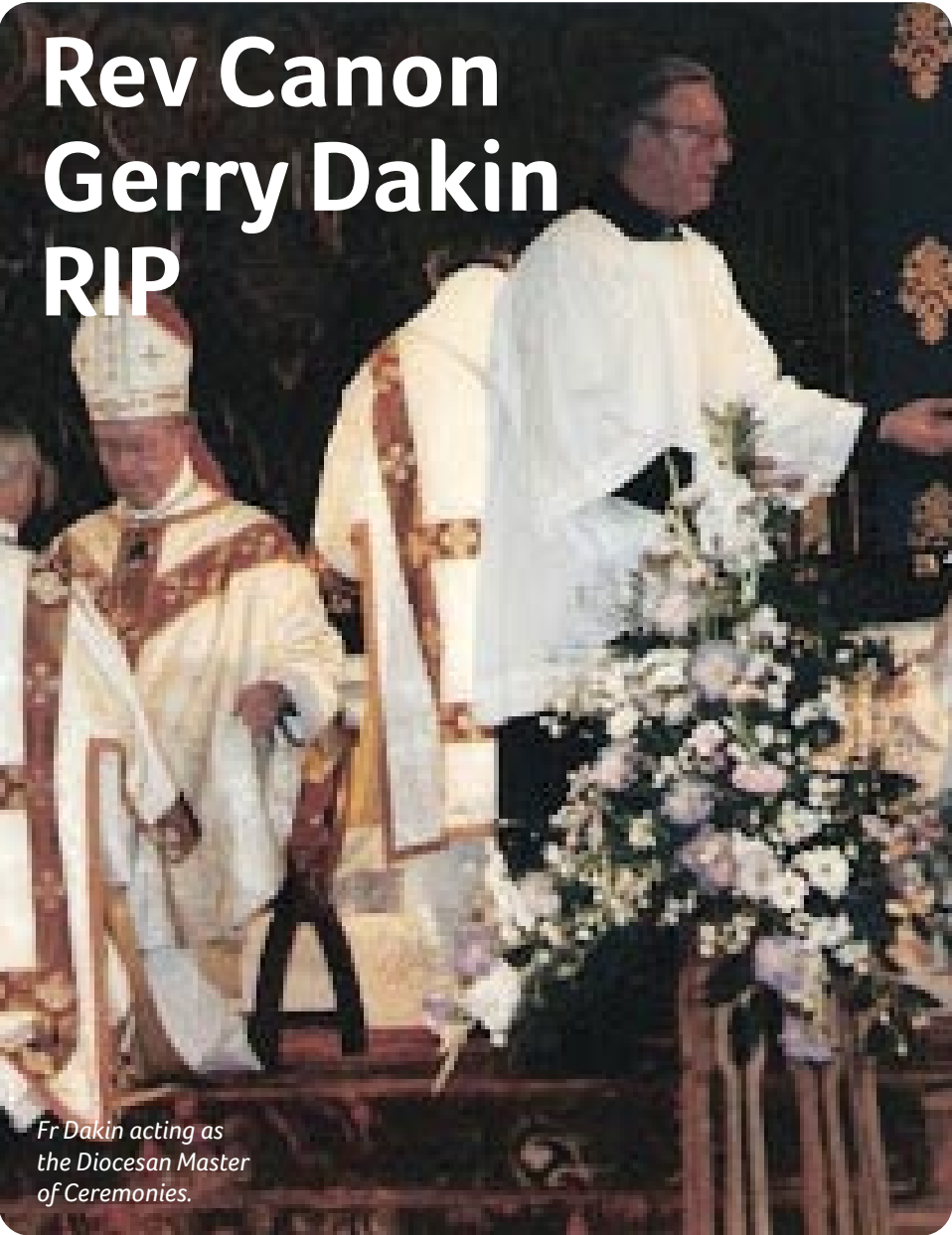


be flowing either into or out of the ark, reminding us that the Church exists for all and is called to go and make all nations Christ's disciples. One speaker reminded us of the scale of the challenge we face in making disciples in the West: ours, he said, is not so much an age of change as a change of age. We are confronted by a secular culture, where many have long since lost the language and memory of faith. The testimonies lifted our spirits and were deeply moving. Several spoke of finding faith despite its total absence in their family background and upbringing, reminding us that with God all is possible

and that we should trust in Christ's promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

The day concluded with prayer, the laying on of hands and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The sense of the Holy Spirit at work was evident throughout the day. We saw signs of His presence all around: in lives wonderfully changed, in longstanding Christians eager to learn more about their faith and to share their journey with others; above all in the visible manifestation of growth and renewal in our parish community.

Robert Hannerford



Gerry was born in Lancaster, in the Cathedral Parish, on 24th April 1928. He attended the Cathedral school before going to Upholland. Thirteen years later he was ordained by Bishop Flynn on the 30th May 1953. He was about three weeks short of 71 years as a priest of this Diocese and in his 97th year when he died on the 6th May.

Priest. In your Parish, as a curate, you had your district and a visiting book and were expected to know both. Often two of three evenings a week were spent instructing converts, usually as a preparation for marriage – dispensations were hard to come by. Up to six hours a week were spent in the confessional, and you were busy.

No priests retired. If you got too old and infirm the Bishop just sent you a curate.

It was probably his experiences as a curate that made Gerry such a good pastoral priest. He cared for people, especially the sick. That first reading sums him up. *“Treat everyone with equal kindness, never be condescending and make real friends with the poor.”* It is appropriate that we are celebrating today the feast of the Visitation, when Our Lady put the needs of Elizabeth above her own needs.

For all the changes that Gerry lived through, the Priesthood is unchanging – though lived out in a different way. It’s always a vocation, a gift, a responsibility, a call to imitate Christ. A call to serve people with joy and dedication with compassion and care.

In these days we need to give thanks for the priests that we have, for their faithfulness and dedication. Pope Francis made the obvious point a few weeks ago, addressing a group of Parish Priests, *“the Church could not go on without your dedication and your pastoral service”*.

Gerry experienced great changes, but he continued to live out his priesthood for almost 71 years, in the last six years or so, living at McAuley Mount, Burnley, where he received such great care. In his final years his speech was difficult – but his smile was always there.

Eternal rest grant unto Gerry O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him, may he rest in peace, Amen
Canon John Gibson

He came from a family of priests, many will remember his elder brother Tom, who died in 2019, but few will remember his uncle, Ham Cunningham, Parish Priest of Knott End, who died in 1966. Gerry served in St. Gregory’s and St. Augustine’s in Preston, then the Shrine and Holy Family in Blackpool. He got his first Parish, St. Thomas Moore in Lancaster, after only 18 years, before moving to St. Margaret Mary’s Carlisle, where I lived with him, then back to Preston here in Sacred Heart Parish, Preston, for 21 years till his retirement in 2003, then he spent some 15 happy years in Lea.

Gerry loved music, and enjoyed his piano. But his great love was for Steam Locomotives. He told me that he had travelled on every Steam train in the north and in Scotland, and many of those in the South. Deacon Chris Barwise claims that he was called upon to bless a Steam Loco once, but I do know that when he was in Carlisle he arranged to say Mass in the Guards Van for the children, on a School trip to York which happened to fall on an inconvenient Holy Day. Gerry was determined to get to the Railway Museum.

Listening to Gerry talking about his early life as a priest in our Diocese, it’s obvious that it was very different from what we are used to today. Masses were all Tridentine Latin, as was your Breviary, fasting was from Midnight so no evening Masses. Every Church had a Parish Priest and a housekeeper, most had a curate and the big ones two or three. You could wait for 20 years to become a Parish



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A Work of Art

Jenny McLaughlin is a Catholic Artist based in the North West of England and a member of the Society of Catholic Artists. Her aim is for her Catholic Artwork to inspire the viewer, helping them to focus on God and feel the peace and love of God as they go through life's challenges.

Jenny trained in Art and Illustration and undertook commissions for various secular clients before she felt inspired to express her faith through Religious Artworks.

In 2023 she received a Commission to produce Stations of the Cross for St Monica's Chapel in St. John Vianney's church, Blackpool. Jenny said "I am very grateful to Canon Chris Loughran and the Parish of the Guardian Angels for this very special Sacred Art Commission. The Artworks took several months to complete and I am very grateful for all the feedback and guidance I received whilst working on them. The Stations are now in St.Monica's Chapel where they have been hung and Blessed.

The Stations of the Cross follow this order:
I. Jesus is condemned to death.
II. Jesus takes up his cross.

- III. Jesus falls for the first time.
- IV. Jesus meets his mother.
- V. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross.
- VI. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
- VII. Jesus falls a second time.
- VIII. Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem.
- IX. Jesus falls a third time.
- X. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
- XI. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
- XII. Jesus dies on the cross.
- XIII. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
- XIV. Jesus is placed in the tomb.

"I consider the undertaking of this commission a great honour. I had not realised the depth of Christ's love for us quite as fully as I did whilst working on this commission. I also don't think I have cried quite as much whilst working on Artwork; the incredible sacrifice Christ made for us all... and how Mary's heart must have been pierced to see her son suffer so much. 'But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us'. Romans 5:8 'Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' John 15:13."

The Stations of the Cross Commission 2023 has been a great honour and can be viewed at: jennifersillustrations.co.uk



We can easily overlook that young people value diversity, prioritise peaceful activism, and care about sustainability and climate justice. Sadly, many young people witness or experience violence and lack alternative ways of dealing with conflict.

The conflict can be as simple as being cancelled to domestic, civil, or international violence. It is, therefore, important to equip young people to be peacemakers and reconcilers, which is at the heart of Christianity. The Action Impact Youth Group at St Bede's Catholic High School, UK, is a group of young people who seek to promote peace. The following is a letter they write to you.

We attend the Action Impact Youth Group at St Bede's Catholic High School Lytham. We are part of the National YCW/IMPACT

movement of England and Wales based in Manchester: *"the movement run for & by young people and amongst young people"*.

The age range of our youth group at St Bede's is 12-16 years old, and there are 40 young people involved in the youth group. We meet regularly every week in school during term time to create and develop opportunities for youth-led projects/activities on various Social and Community Action Projects in the local community.

We have a "Youth Hub" which meets in school every Wednesday during the school term, for young people to meet, have time out at lunchtime, chat and make friends and have "FUN".

Recently, we applied for a grant to the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace and were

successful in being awarded a grant. We worked together as young people on the youth-led application, combining multiple ideas and finding a focus.

As young people, we decided that we wanted change in our community and the wider world through peace.

We have noticed that peace has been neglected throughout the world, in favour of money, power and status. It consumes people, turns them away from it, and creates more important issues like inequality, injustice, segregation, conflict and war. We know that if this cycle continues, future generations will grow up with little sense of diversity, community and global love. This is why we would love to use this money to educate the young and old on topics of peace and justice and to provoke change.

We believe that we can improve the lives of all people in our local and global communities, highlighting themes of peace, love and equality for people of all ethnicities, faiths, ages, genders and sexualities.

It is hugely important to us that this reaches all people, especially those young people and families on the margins of society.

As a Catholic school, love, peace, and inclusion are some of the most significant parts of our everyday lives. It would be amazing for us to extend these qualities to our community and further. Using social media, workshops, and programs, we will aim to do this, hopefully initiating a wave of change around the world: encouraging love, equality, and peace.

Young People of St Bede's Catholic High School's Action Impact Youth Group

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