

**Issue 369 + May '25**

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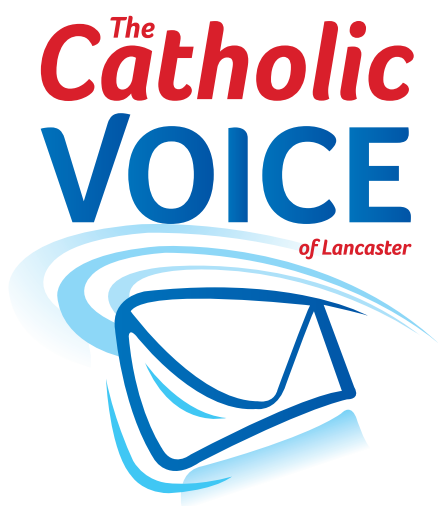


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**The Catholic Voice of Lancaster** is published on the last Sunday of the month previous to publication date.

**The Catholic Voice of Lancaster** is published by its owners. The Trustees of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lancaster, a registered charity, (No. 234331), and is wholly independent of and separate from any previous newspaper published by or on behalf of the diocese.

**EDITOR:**  
Pearl Mina  
07901 696 490  
CatholicVoiceNews@lrcd.org.uk

**EDITORIAL TEAM**  
Frances Wygladala  
Distribution & Editorial Contributor  
Andrew Wygladala  
Distribution & Assistant Editor

**ADVERTISING:**  
Charlotte Rosbrooke / CathCom Ltd.  
01440 730399  
charlotter@cathcom.org  
www.cathcom.org

**PUBLISHED BY:**  
CathCom Ltd. N2 Blois Meadow  
Business Centre, Blois Road, Steeple  
Bumpstead, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 7BN  
020 7112 6710  
www.cathcom.org

**Articles & Letters to:**  
[CatholicVoiceNews@lrcd.org.uk](mailto:CatholicVoiceNews@lrcd.org.uk)

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**  
FAO Father Stephen Pearson  
The Catholic Voice of Lancaster  
C/o Holy Family Catholic Church  
1 Lytham Road  
Freckleton  
Preston PR4 1AD

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Bishop Paul Swarbrick and Fr John Millar (Cathedral Dean) with the Book of Condolence for Pope Francis at the Requiem Low Mass held at Lancaster Cathedral, Easter Monday evening.



# Statement from the Catholic Diocese of Lancaster upon the death of our Holy Father Pope Francis

**It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, after a period of ill-health.**

On Easter Sunday, Pope Francis made a brief appearance at St Peter's Square to bless thousands of people gathered in Rome to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord.

May he now rest in the peace of the Risen Christ whose faithful servant he has been. We are deeply grateful for the

life and service of Pope Francis. While we mourn his loss, we are thankful for his steadfast witness and legacy. His life of discipleship, and then leadership, within the Church saw him accept responsibility from the Lord as a Jesuit, a priest, a bishop, and finally as successor to St Peter.

His firm resolve and challenging teaching on issues including care for creation, the sexual abuse of children, and insights into intimacy of human relationships, saw the Pope broaden opportunities for

dialogue within the Church, and with people and groups from outside the Catholic Church.  
  
Masses for the repose of the Pope's soul will be offered across the churches of our Diocese in the coming days. We entrust Pope Francis to the Father of all mercies and pray for the happy repose of his soul. Please remember Pope Francis in your prayers.

*Rt Rev Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster*



Cardinal Vincent Nichols,  
President of the Catholic  
Bishops' Conference of  
England and Wales.

## Obituary of Pope Francis, the 265th successor of Saint Peter, by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales

**Pope Francis has died aged 88, the Vatican Press Office confirmed on Easter Monday, April 21st.**

He was the 265th successor of St Peter from his election on 13 March 2013 to 21 April 2025.

At 9:45am, Rome time, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Camerlengo of the Apostolic Chamber, announced the death of Pope Francis from the Casa Santa Marta with these words:

*"Dearest brothers and sisters, with deep sorrow I must announce the death of our Holy Father Francis. At 7:35 this morning, the Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the house of the Father."*

*His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and of His Church. He taught us to live the values of the Gospel with fidelity, courage, and universal love, especially in favor of the poorest and most marginalised.*

*With immense gratitude for his example as a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, we commend the soul of Pope Francis to the infinite merciful love of the One and Triune God."*

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and Archbishop of Westminster, said:

*"The death of Pope Francis brings great sadness to so many around the world, both within the Catholic Church and in societies in general. A voice proclaiming the innate dignity of every human being, especially those who are poor or marginalised, is now silent. The legacy he leaves is one we must seek to carry forward and strengthen."*

*"Pope Francis was called to priesthood through his experience of the mercy and compassion of God. This remained the core of his ministry, as Priest, Bishop and Pontiff. Only in understanding the love and mercy of God towards each one of us can we fashion societies and communities that bear the mark of the 'kingdom of God'."*

*"This same focus and emphasis lay at this desire to see membership of the Church as being rooted in 'missionary discipleship', a dynamic and powerful vision for every Christian and every community. Now we pray for the repose of his soul, that he may know, in full measure, the merciful and loving embrace of the Father, of the one God to whom he gave his life in unstinting service. May he now rest in peace and rise in glory."*

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales will celebrate Requiem Masses for the repose of the soul of the late Pope in their cathedrals.



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### UP TO DATE INFORMATION

Please check up to date information, mass times and dates at your local parishes for more information and for all masses at Lancaster Cathedral please visit the website:

**[www.lancastercathedral.org.uk](http://www.lancastercathedral.org.uk)**





# Prayers Upon the Death of Pope Francis



Prayer booklet from the  
Office for the Catholic  
Bishops' Conference of  
England and Wales.



Prepared by the Liturgy Office for the Catholic Bishops' Conference  
of England and Wales 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX  
[www.catholicchurch.org.uk](http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk)  
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## Prayer for the Successor of Pope Francis

O God, who chose your servant,  
in succession to the Apostle Peter  
as shepherd of the whole flock,  
look favourably on the supplications of your people  
and grant that, as Vicar of Christ on earth,  
he may confirm his brethren  
and that the whole Church may be in communion with him  
in the bond of unity, love and peace,  
so that in you, the shepherd of souls,  
all may know the truth and attain life eternal.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## Prayer for Francis

O God, faithful rewarder of souls,  
grant that your departed servant Pope Francis,  
whom you made successor of Peter  
and shepherd of your Church,  
may happily enjoy for ever in your presence in heaven  
the mysteries of your grace and compassion,  
which he faithfully ministered on earth.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Eternal rest, grant unto him O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon him.

May he rest in peace. Amen.

May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

## Psalm 120

I lift up my eyes to the mountains:  
from where shall come my help?  
My help shall come from the Lord  
who made heaven and earth.

May he never allow you to stumble!  
Let him sleep not your guard.  
No, he sleeps not nor slumbers,  
Israel's guard.

## Canticle of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis) (Luke 2:29-32)

At last, all-powerful Master, you give leave to your servant to go in peace, according  
to your promise. For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared for  
all nations, the light to enlighten the Gentiles and give glory to Israel, your people.

The Lord is your guard and your shade;  
at your right side he stands.  
By day the sun shall not smite you  
nor the moon in the night.

The Lord will guard you from evil,  
he will guard your soul.  
The Lord will guard your going and coming  
both now and for ever.





## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

We share our sorrow & grief with you all at this very sad time, at the passing of our dear Holy Father Pope Francis.



As we go to press, we are aware that significant events continue to develop and news evolves about Pope Francis and his successor. The breaking news of Pope Francis death on Easter Monday came as we were about to publish our May edition. We have changed and adapted our editorial, stories and theme to respond to the news & commemorate this sad time in our Catholic community and our history of Papal leadership for our Universal Church. We apologise to our contributors who have sent their stories in for the May edition, as we have had to put these on hold & will publish these subsequently over the next few editions. We thank you for your understanding. I would like to thank our hard working editorial and creative team - Rob Hotchkiss for his fast turnaround of design with our pictures, graphics and stories, Fran & Andrew Wygladala for their sterling support and Bishop Paul Swarbrick for his compassionate leadership and words of comfort to our readers.

Please share with the *Catholic Voice of Lancaster* your pictures, parishes & people during this reflective time, as we mourn and pray for the repose of the soul of Pope Francis. Thank you dear readers for your continued support & prayers.

God Bless You All,  
Pearl, Editor of *The Catholic Voice of Lancaster*



# Franciscus *The People's Pope*

**Pope Francis was the first non-European Pope for nearly 1,300 years since Gregory III, an 8th Century Syrian.**

An Argentinean, he was the first Pope from the southern hemisphere and was also the first Pope to be a member of the Society of Jesus.

A champion of ecclesial reform, an advocate for the poor and refugees, Pope Francis urged the world to develop a relationship with the Earth which he called *"Our Common Home"*. He said we face an *"environmental-social crisis,"* marked by *"globalised indifference to the poor"*. Care for people, he said, should always trump financial gain. *"My people are poor and I am one of them,"* was a favoured saying.

These were not mere words: Francis chose to live in two plain rooms in the Vatican guesthouse rather than the residence in the Apostolic Palace traditionally used by Popes. He would invite the homeless to celebrate his birthday. At Francis's behest, free showers and launderettes for the destitute were opened in Rome. He created a Vatican Office for the care of refugees and migrants.

Francis urged every Catholic parish and monastery in Europe to welcome a migrant family after bringing 12 refugees from Syria from Greece to re-settle in Italy. He visualised the Church as a *"field-hospital"* where sinners (*he included himself*) encounter God's healing love and mercy. His message was that God's love was for everyone, including those who felt

alienated from the Church for whatever reason. He stressed the need for every person to see their lives as a step by step journey into closer union with God, following the way and teaching of Jesus, the Christ. Ultimately, Francis desired a simple Church focused on evangelisation and sensitive to the needs of the poor.

In 2013, Time magazine named Francis their *"person of the year"* for bringing the Papacy *"out of the palace and onto the streets."*

### **The Mercy of God**

Mercy was a key word for Francis's papacy.

*"Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's Mercy,"* he observed, saying God's mercy was no *"abstract idea,"* but something tangible and tender, like a parent's love for their child. This is revealed through acts of love. Francis declared a Year of Mercy (8 December 2015– 20 November 2016).

He began the year by opening the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica in Rome. A symbol of God's mercy working in our lives, the door is opened every Holy Year, a period that recurs roughly every quarter-century. For the first time, similar holy doors were opened in cathedrals in dioceses around the world.

Reconciliation with God was central to the year. Catholics were encouraged to frequent Confession, a sacrament the Pope called *"an encounter with the Lord's mercy."*

**David Pope** dip FD MBIFD

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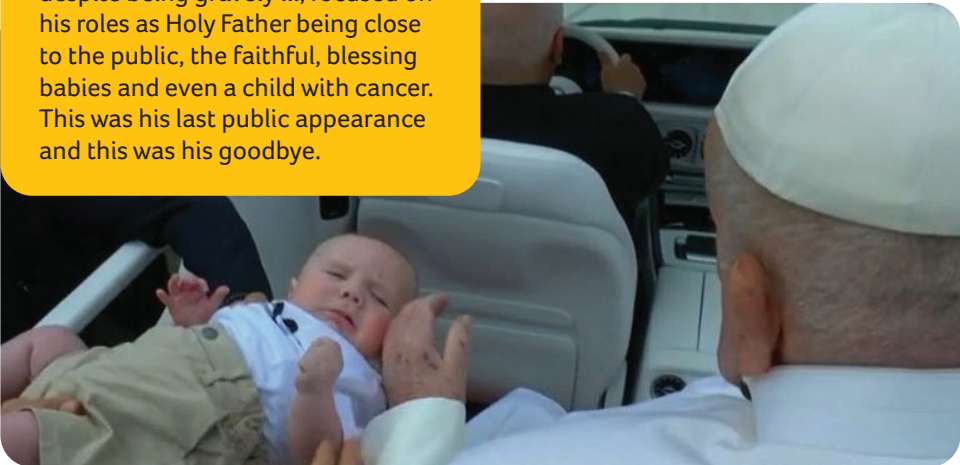
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**The People's Pope**  
Pope Francis, doing what he did best, despite being gravely ill, focused on his roles as Holy Father being close to the public, the faithful, blessing babies and even a child with cancer. This was his last public appearance and this was his goodbye.



# A legacy of love, peace, mercy and redemption remembered

*“The resurrection of Jesus is our hope and hope does not disappoint”*



Pearl Mina, Editor of *The Catholic Voice of Lancaster* reflects on the late Pope Francis & his lasting legacy of Mercy & the Resurrection of Jesus, as spoken in his last Easter Sunday Urbi et Orbi message of 2025, in St Peter's Square.

**As we mourn Pope Francis' passing, his Easter message resonates: Christ's resurrection is our hope, where love triumphs over hate and light over darkness.**

Pope Francis's last public appearance and his final gesture of love for the Church was his Easter Sunday Urbi et Orbi blessing in which Catholics around the world celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter.

Pope Francis sought to reform the Catholic Church at every level, from its decision-making processes to rooting out financial corruption in the Vatican Curia.

**“Todos, Todos, Todos,”**  
“Everyone, Everyone, Everyone,” he encouraged young people to chant at World Youth Day in Lisbon in 2023. “That is the Church,” he said. “There is room for all.” Reflecting on the spiritual significance of Easter, Francis reminded the faithful that Christ's resurrection represents “the basis of our hope” and that “hope does not disappoint!”

As our Holy Father is in our minds and in our prayers and in our hearts, after his

passing, we can recall his words. In his Easter Urbi et Orbi message, literally meaning ‘to the city of Rome and to the world,’ our Holy Father reminded us that the Resurrection of Jesus is the basis of your hope and hope does not disappoint.

*“Sisters and brothers, especially those of you experiencing pain and sorrow, your silent cry has been heard and your tears have been counted; not one of them has been lost!”*

*“In the passion and death of Jesus, God has taken upon himself all the evil in this world and in his infinite mercy has defeated it. He has uprooted the diabolical pride that poisons the human heart and wreaks violence and corruption on every side. The Lamb of God is victorious! That is why, today, we can joyfully cry out: “Christ, my hope, has risen!” (Easter Sequence).*

The resurrection of Jesus is indeed the basis of our hope. For in the light of this event, hope is no longer an illusion. Thanks to Christ — crucified and risen from the dead — hope does not disappoint! Spes non confundit! (cf. Rom 5:5).



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The Peacemaker Pope – Pope Francis meets President Donald Trump.



Pope Francis met privately in April with King Charles III & Queen Camilla and he expressed his best wishes & blessings for their 20th Wedding Anniversary.

Courtesy & Credit of Vatican News.

That hope is not an evasion, but a challenge; it does not delude, but empowers us. All those who put their hope in God place their feeble hands in his strong and mighty hand; they let themselves be raised up and set out on a journey. Together with the risen Jesus, they become pilgrims of hope, witnesses of the victory of love and of the disarmed power of Life.

#### Christ is risen!

These words capture the whole meaning of our existence, for we were not made for death but for life. Easter is the celebration of life! God created us for life and wants the human family to rise again! In his eyes, every life is precious! The life of a child in the mother's womb,

as well as the lives of the elderly and the sick, who in more and more countries are looked upon as people to be discarded. In the way the Holy Father described it, his message is that:

**"In the death and resurrection of Christ, Love has triumphed over hatred, Light over darkness and truth over falsehood, Forgiveness over revenge."**

**"Evil" Pope Francis said "has not disappeared from history it will remain until the end, but it will no longer have the upper hand. It no longer has power over those who accept the grace of this day."**

**"In the Lord's Paschal Mystery, death and life contended in a stupendous struggle,**

**but the Lord now lives forever (cf. Easter Sequence). He fills us with the certainty that we too are called to share in the life that knows no end, when the clash of arms and the rumble of death will be heard no more."**

The message Urbi et Orbi concluded with the Pontiff's customary invocation for a peaceful world: "Let us entrust ourselves to him, for he alone can make all things new." Eternal rest, grant unto Pope Francis O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

For Pope Francis' Full Easter 2025 Urbi Et Orbi message go to the website of The Holy See – [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)




This picture was sent in by readers Ian and Helen Morton, from the Church of Santa Andrea in Rome.






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As we join Catholics around the world in mourning, Bishop Paul leads the Diocese through Requiem Masses and prayers - *honouring and remembering Pope Francis*

**O**n Easter Monday, we learned that our Holy Father, Pope Francis had died that very morning. May his soul rest in the peace of the Risen Christ.

As with each person we grieve for, we will thank God for his life, we will pray for him - as he would wish - that the Lord will be a merciful judge, and we also remember how each of us carries seeds of mortality and must prepare ourselves for our own day and time, hidden from us.

In addition, we must pray for the church, presently (*as we go to press*) without a successor to Peter. Her life and mission is not put on pause whilst we await the election of a new pope. She remains guided by the Holy Spirit, in the presence of the Risen Christ, but still dependant on the ministry of those capable of sin, so we must pray that she is powerfully guided by the spirit at this time.

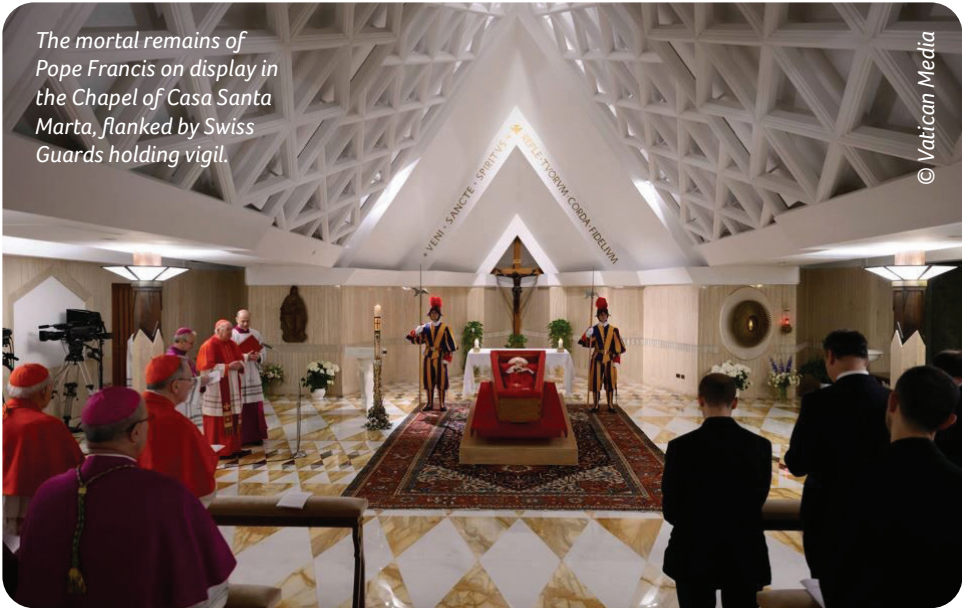
We are in the Easter Octave, and the church refuses to let our grief eclipse in any way the light of the Resurrection.

Since on Easter Monday we held our first Evening Prayers followed by a Requiem Mass and then on Monday April 28, we celebrated a formal Requiem Mass for our late Holy Father and I was pleased to see so many of you gather at St Peter's Cathedral for these masses. Pope Francis would approve of that. He has been a worthy leader of the church in increasingly difficult times. He has reminded us of the need to carry the joy of the gospel as we strive to follow Christ. His call for us to care for our common home has touched the hearts of many outside the church. Mondays Requiem Mass was an opportunity for us to remember his ministry and thank God for him in more detail.

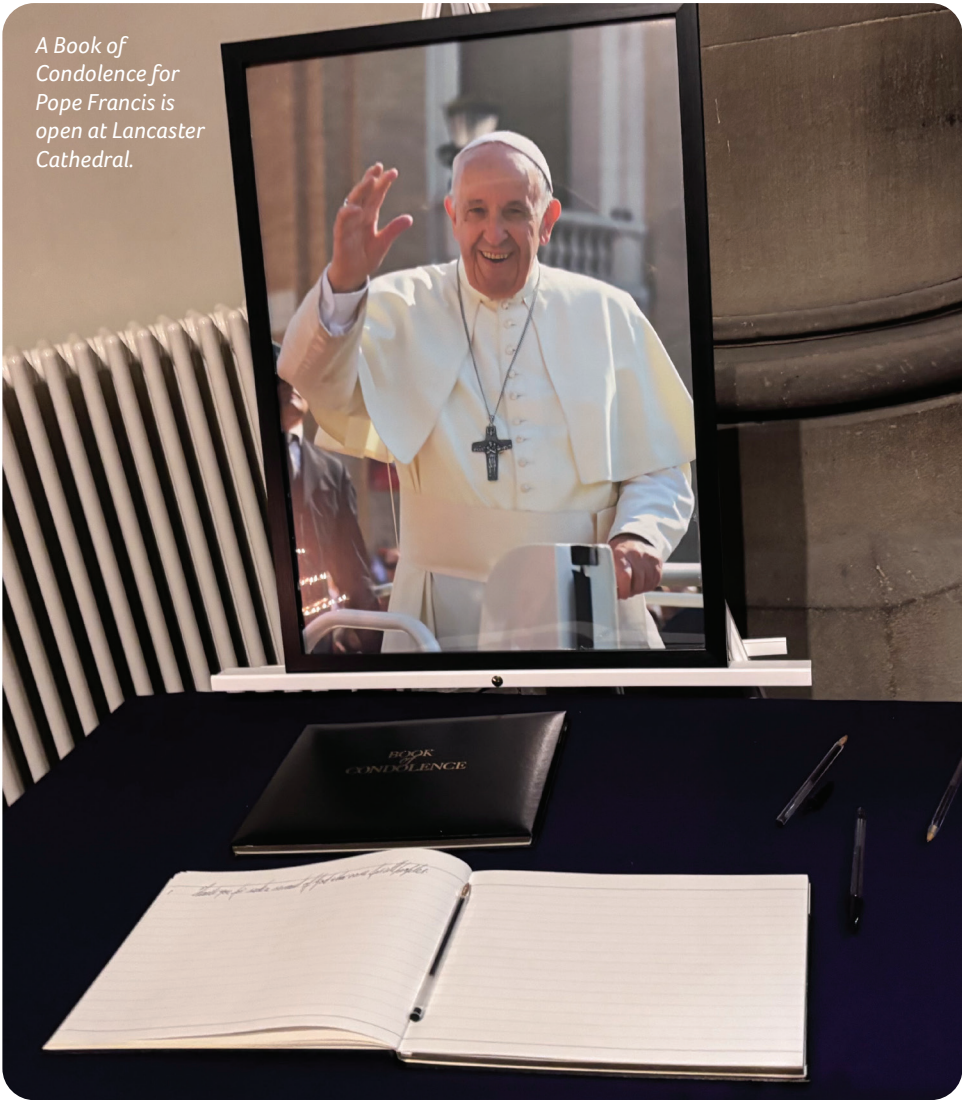
Going forward into the month of May, let us remember him in our prayers, at Mass and in how we care for one another.

*Eternal rest grant unto us O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him, may he rest in peace. Amen.*

*Rt Rev Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster*



**Rest in Peace Most Holy Father, Supreme Pastor of The Church. “Well done my good and faithful servant.”**

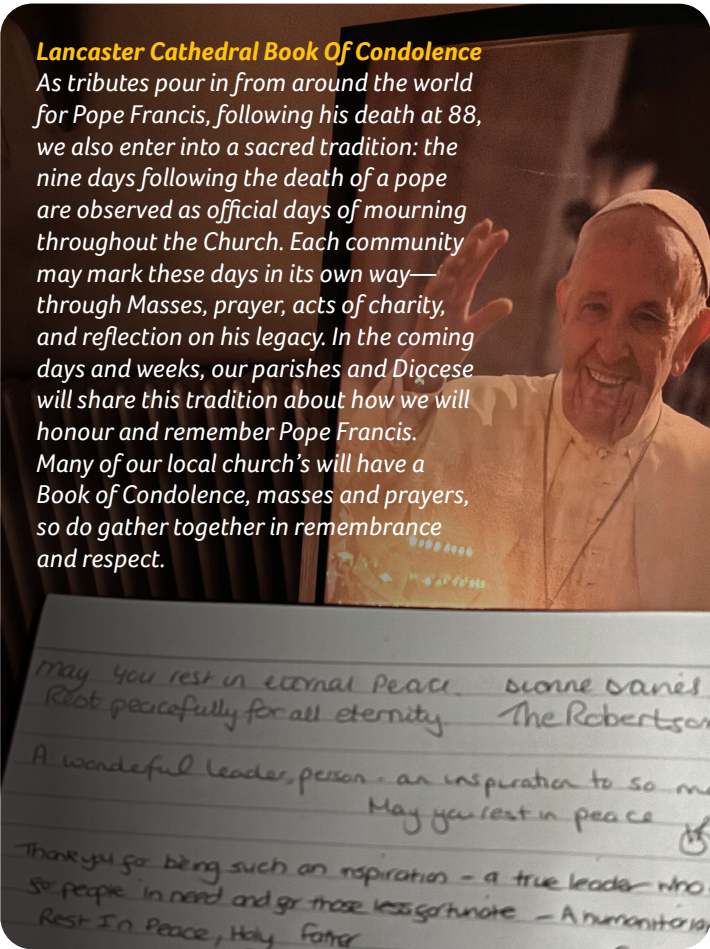






Pope Francis greets Bishop Paul Swarbrick at his appointment of Bishop of Lancaster.

**Lancaster Cathedral Book Of Condolence**  
As tributes pour in from around the world for Pope Francis, following his death at 88, we also enter into a sacred tradition: the nine days following the death of a pope are observed as official days of mourning throughout the Church. Each community may mark these days in its own way—through Masses, prayer, acts of charity, and reflection on his legacy. In the coming days and weeks, our parishes and Diocese will share this tradition about how we will honour and remember Pope Francis. Many of our local church's will have a Book of Condolence, masses and prayers, so do gather together in remembrance and respect.



May you rest in eternal Peace. - Dianne Daniel  
Rest peacefully for all eternity. - The Robertsons  
A wonderful leader, person - an inspiration to so many. May you rest in peace.  
Thank you for being such an inspiration - a true leader who served people in need and for those less fortunate - A humanitarian. Rest In Peace, Holy Father.

**FRANCISCUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI**

dissecto filio **Paulo Swarbrick**, e clero diocesis Lancastrensis ibique hactenus Christi Boni Pastoris parociae in oppido "Workington" curioni, electo Episcopo eiusdem Sedis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Qui successimus in locum beati Petri de totius Dominici gregis bono summo solliciti. Cum providendum sit quidem Cathedrali Ecclesiae Lancastrensi, vacanti post renuntiationem Venerabilis Fratris Michaelis Gregorii Campbell O.S.A., tu, dilecte fili, debitis dotibus ornatus rerumque ecclesialium loci peritus, videris idoneus quem eidem praeficiamus. Audito igitur consilio Congregationis pro Episcopis, summa Apostolica Nostra potestate te Episcopum **Lancastrensem** cunctis cum iuribus et obligationibus constituimus. Ordinationem a quolibet catholico Episcopo extra urbem Romam accipias liturgicis servatis legibus ac praemissis catholicae fidei professione iureque iurando fidelitatis erga Nos et Nostros Successores secundum sacros canones. Mandamus praeterea ut hinc de Litteris fiant certiores clerus populusque eiusdem Sedis, quos hortamur ut tecum coniuncti maneant. Pro te denique, dilecte fili, Paracliti Spiritus, "luminis cordium", dona precemur, qui bus suffultus fideles tuos valeas pacere sollicita caritate, verbis magisque quadabili eloquio exempli tuae vitae. Pax quoque Sanctissimi Redemptoris, auspice beata Virgine Maria, sit iugiter tecum et cum ista carissima ecclesiali communitate in dilecta Anglia. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die duodecimo mensis Februarii, anno Domini bis millesimo duodevicesimo, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

Bishop Paul Swarbrick was appointed by Pope Francis as the new Bishop of Lancaster. He was announced as the seventh Bishop of Lancaster by Pope Francis on 12 February 2018 and ordained Bishop and installed as Diocesan Bishop by Bishop Michael Campbell on 9 April 2018 at St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster.

*Jun. 12. 2018. Piv. Feb. April*

The Papal Bull announcing Bishop Paul's appointment as the new Bishop of Lancaster.



Roy & Liz Quispe - Parishioners at Lancaster Cathedral sign the Book of Condolence.



The Popes final Easter Sunday Blessing at The Vatican, Easter Sunday 20th April 2025.



**Flame 2025 is the UK's largest Catholic Youth Conference and took place at Londons OVO Arena, Wembley in March. Some of our Catholic high school and academy students and Chaplains went along and share their experiences here.**

# Lancaster Diocese Catholic High School Students Fan the *Flames of Hope*



Students from Our Lady's, Cardinal Allen and St Bedes Catholic Schools at The Flame 2025 Conference.



Students from St Mary's Academy set off to London Flame Conference.

**Chaplain Christine Smith of St Mary's Catholic Academy & Chaplain Jenny Ball, St Bede's Catholic High School share the spirit filled hope of Flame 2025, which is a vital inspiration in our young people's lives.**

**O**n Saturday 15th March, a group of students from four of our Diocesan Catholic high schools and academies embarked on an inspiring journey to London to attend the Flame Youth Congress at Wembley Arena.

The intrepid group from St Bede's Catholic High School, Lytham, Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood, St Mary's Catholic Academy Blackpool, and Our Lady's Catholic High School, Fulwood set off bright and early at 6am, and became part of a vibrant gathering of 10,800 young people, all united in faith and enthusiasm.

The Flame event was an electrifying mix of faith based music, prayers, adoration of the blessed sacrament, dance and drama. Along with thought-provoking video content, interwoven with powerful talks from faith based speakers from across the world.

One of the most eagerly anticipated speakers was Bear Grylls OBE, who captivated the audience by openly sharing his personal faith journey. In an incredible gesture, he also gifted every attendee a free copy of his new book based on the Gospels. The theme for this year's congress.

The message was clear and deeply resonated with our students. We have returned to our schools having made new friends and feeling grateful for sharing our day together. We are excited to apply what we have learned to our daily lives, spread joy and reinforce the message that together, we are truly unstoppable.

Flame 2025 concluded with a moving moment of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, led by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, capping a day of spiritual renewal, encouraging young people to return to their parishes and schools as ambassadors of hope.





Archbishop Vincent Nichols with students from Cardinal Allen Catholic High School.

“  
Fan into a  
flame, the  
gift of God,  
which is  
in you.

12 Tim 1:6

”



Fanning the Flame in London - St Bedes students arrive.



St Bedes and other students gather together at The Flame Conference.



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# Faith Wins Out Over Fear – Bear Grylls OBE

In conversation at Flame 2025 with Catholic speaker David Wells, Mr Grylls shed light on his Christian faith:

“Faith is in your heart, faith is in relationships, faith is a constant connection to the Almighty. I have many struggles, many doubts, I really don’t have it all together, but I know that I am loved and held, and the light shines.

“Faith is part of the adventure, faith is the adventure. It’s a journey... It’s a backbone, a streak of steel, the presence of Jesus besides us in the highs and the lows. It’s fire and life and water, all in one. It’s a journey.”

To a packed out and loud crowd, he added: “I hope you have an amazing rest of Flame. You guys are unstoppable!”

Flame’s theme of “Unstoppable: Fan the flame of hope” echoed what Pope Francis calls us to be in this year of Jubilee: “Pilgrims of Hope.”



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## Some reflections on the day from our young people:

Fr Dominic Howarth, a priest of Brentwood Diocese who co-chairs the planning team for Flame 2025, read a message from the Apostolic Nuncio in Great Britain, H. E. Archbishop Miguel Mary Buendía, who encouraged the young people: “Let your faith shine brightly in the world, and know that you are not alone on this journey.”

Bea, Evie, Lila, Bridget, Freya, Lilly, John, Elliot, Evie, Scarlett, students at St Bede’s Catholic High School, Lytham:

Sophia, Year 10 at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood:

“It was an icy morning, the sun was yet to rise, my watch read 5:00am. The coldness disappeared when we felt the warm atmosphere of the coach full of fellow Catholics from 4 other schools in the Diocese. After a six hour journey, I was taken aback by the strong feeling of faith and community in Wembley Arena.

“How would I describe my FLAME 2025 experience? For months beforehand, I was so excited to go to this huge event; I wouldn’t stop talking about it, but I had no idea really what it would be like!

“The Flame Conference 2025 was an immense experience and we felt in communion with others and more open to Christ, as we knew there were many other people our age with the same beliefs.

But genuinely, the reality was so much more than I expected! As soon as we arrived, people were so friendly, welcoming and couldn’t have been any nicer. Our first stop was the One Hope Project stand – we had been listening to their music all week in preparation. I bought a bag that I will keep forever! The atmosphere inside was amazing; people laughing and dancing along to the songs being performed; it was so electric.

“When Bear Grylls spoke he was very inspiring and made us feel we could achieve anything as long as we had God. We are unstoppable.

The highlight of the day was definitely getting the chance to speak with, Cardinal Vincent Nichols! We have learnt about him in RE, and that he gave our group so much of his time made FLAME a day that I, and my friends, will never forget.

“The music, the drama and the testimonies all helped to strengthen our faith and we hope we can have a similar experience again. The 7 hour coach journey home was less unbearable after experiencing this incredible event. It was midnight, the darkness had fallen once again, but the ‘Flame’ was still burning brightly in our hearts & souls.”

“Ending with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was so peaceful and it was amazing being able to feel so comfortable praying with thousands of other people. It really felt like we are all a part of this one big community.”

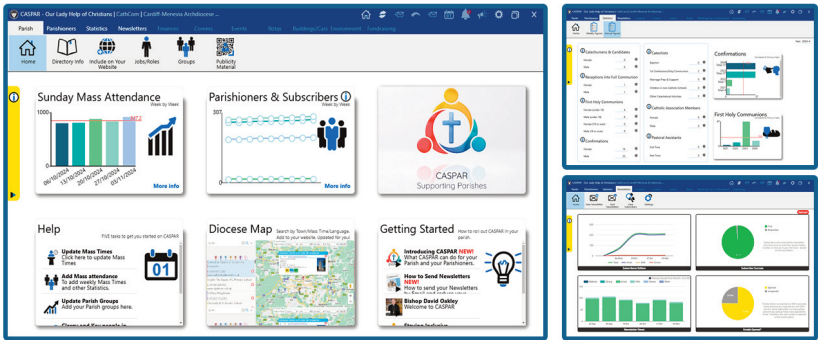
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St Bede's students sharing the joy of Jesus.

Faithful Companions of Jesus





*“What a privilege to share this message to 10,000 people at Wembley arena for the Flame Congress faith convention. Reminding the teenagers that school is a RUNWAY for life, and that true Faith is in your heart, in your friendships, and burns like an ember. And above all, to know that we are loved and held by the Almighty through the storms of life. #FLAME2025.”*

*Bear Grylls*



**Solomon & Zac, Year 10 pupils from Our Lady’s Catholic High School, Fulwood:**

*“Flame was a really positive Catholic concert that helped us, as young people, to deepen our faith. It featured inspiring talks, engaging live music, and opportunities for prayer and reflection. Being with so many other young Catholics created a strong sense of community and highlighted the lively spirit of the Church’s youth. We found ourselves feeling uplifted and more inspired in our faith journey afterwards, which was a truly valuable aspect of the event.”*



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**Kate & Keira, students from St Mary’s Catholic Academy, Blackpool:**

*“Flame 2025 was an extraordinary experience. It was an amazing celebration of our Catholic faith which brought communities from all over the world to celebrate the word of God. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, pray and learn the stories of our friends around the world. During the lunch break we were volunteering in the foyer. We spoke to people about the debt crisis around the world and gathered people’s finger prints and signatures on stickers to promote solving it.*

*“After the lunch break the stickers were all stuck on giant hands saying ‘Cancel Debt. Choose Hope.’ and then displayed to the whole arena. It was lovely to be able to meet hundreds of people who were willing to help CAFOD’s cause to cancel world debt and their kindness is something we’ll never be able to forget.”*



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# O Mary! We crown thee with blossoms today Queen of the Angels Queen of The May



Bring flowers of the rarest  
Bring flowers the fairest,  
From garden and woodland and hillside and dale;  
Our full hearts are swelling,  
Our glad voices telling  
The praise of the loveliest flower of the vale!

Hymn Credit - written by Mary E. Walsh "Bring Flowers of The Rarest"



# Make May About Mary

In this special year of our Diocesan Centenary celebrations and the Jubilee Year of Hope, take some time out in May to visit one of our beautiful Marian Shrines at Ladeywell, Fernyhalgh and St Mary's, Cleator Moor.



With Mary.  
PILGRIMS OF HOPE  
2025



**The Catholic Voice of Lancaster would like to hear from you!**

If your parish or school has any news or if you would personally like to submit an article for publication, please send us what you have. Contact details can be found on page 2.



1/ Crowning of Mary Queen of The May, St Cuthbert's RC Church, Blackpool.

2/ Our Lady of Lourdes Statue at Lancaster Cathedral, Patroness of The Diocese Lancaster Cathedral.

3/ Garden grotto at Holy Family RC Church, Freckleton.

4/ Ladyewell, Fernyhalgh, Fulwood, Preston.

**THIS MONTH**

Create a Grotto in your garden at home and send in your pictures by emailing them to: [CatholicVoiceNews@lrcd.org.uk](mailto:CatholicVoiceNews@lrcd.org.uk)

*"The month of May is a month which the piety of the faithful has long dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God.*

*"Our heart rejoices at the thought of the moving tribute of faith and love which will soon be paid to the Queen of heaven in every corner of the earth.*

*"For this is the month during which Christians in their churches and their homes, offer the Virgin Mother more fervent and loving acts of homage and veneration; and it is the month in which a greater abundance of God's merciful gifts comes down to us from our Mother's throne."*

From Mense Maio - The Month of May which details the church's special devotion to Mary during May. Pope Paul VI (1965)



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Our Lady of Fatima Feast Day  
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**13th May 2025**

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# National Altar Servers Mass to be held at Lancaster Cathedral

All Altar Servers across Lancashire and Cumbria are invited to join in the National Mass in May.

The Archconfraternity of St Stephen is inviting all Altar Servers and their families to the annual National Mass of 2025, to be hosted by the Diocese of Lancaster in its centenary year, at St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster on Saturday 17th May at 12.15pm. The aim is to reach and bring together as many Altar Servers as possible, young and old, their families and clergy, to grow in faith, service and friendship.

Ian Mullholland, Director of The Lancaster Diocese branch of the Guild of St Stephen is encouraging altar servers from all over the Lancashire and Cumbria as well as the UK to get involved and attend:

*"We hope that our Diocesan servers from our local parishes and schools will make*

*the pilgrimage journey to Lancaster for this special National Mass. As this is a national event, we also look forward to welcoming servers from our neighbouring dioceses and further afield.*

*We are grateful to Bishop Swarbrick and the Cathedral staff for their support and all those involved in organising this Mass."*

The tower will be open ringing for half an hour before Mass. Servers or their family members who can ring bells are welcome to join the team before going to vest. Due to work needing to take place in the tower, the ringers are currently ringing on 6 bells, tenor 19cwt. Visitors will need to be able to ring bells of that weight with a fairly long draught confidently. Please let us know if you are interested.

*Paul Woodhouse*

For enquiries, please contact:  
[nationalmass@guildofststephen.org](mailto:nationalmass@guildofststephen.org)



Bishop Paul Swarbrick with Altar Server Star Worthington from The Sacred Heart RC Church, Blackpool, who is a member of St Stephens Guild.

[www.guildofststephen.org](http://www.guildofststephen.org)

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