

The Official Newspaper to
the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 370 + June '25

INSIDE: Pages 8&9
Sacred Heart
of Jesus Feast Day
June Celebrations



+++ PAPAL +++
Commemorative
SPECIAL EDITION

**“Peace be
with you!”**



**Pope Leo XIV greets
the city of Rome
and the world at his
first appearance
as the Successor
of Peter from the
central balcony of
St. Peter’s Basilica.**

8th May 2025



Pope Leo XIV

“Dearest brothers and sisters, this was the first greeting of the risen Christ, the good shepherd, who gave His life for the flock of God. I, too, would like this greeting of peace to enter your hearts, to reach your families and all people, wherever they are; and all the peoples, and all the earth: Peace be with you.”

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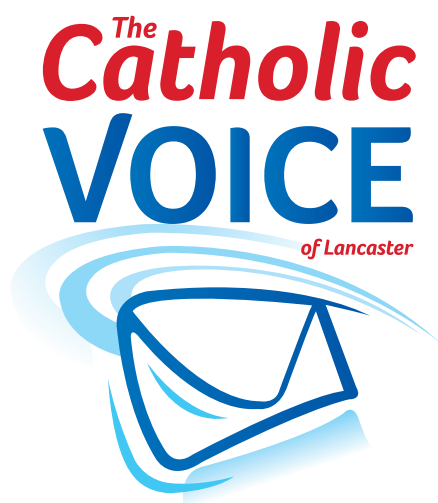
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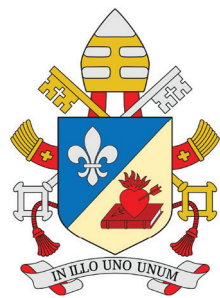
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The Diocese of Lancaster welcomes the election of Pope Leo XIV. We share the joy, celebrations and reactions from across our Diocese on this historic occasion:

Together with the Universal Church, and with all people of good will, the Catholic Diocese of Lancaster in the UK welcomes and commends to the grace of Almighty God Cardinal Robert Prevost OSA as Pope Leo XIV, the successor of St Peter. Pope Leo comes to this universal ministry after many years of professed and ordained life as deacon priest and as a bishop, as a religious, and as a teacher.

As with his predecessors we hold the Holy Father in our prayers and take courage already from the words of his inaugural address with its call for peace across humanity. The times we live in cry out for a fundamentally different approach to serve

the world order, one led by Christ. I ask you to do all you can in your parishes and homes to ensure that our loyalty to the Holy Father is Gospel led, not media led. May we also rejoice in learning that, as Father General of the Order of Saint Augustine, Father Prevost was present in our Cathedral of Saint Peter for the Episcopal Ordination of my predecessor, Bishop Michael Campbell OSA on 31st March 2008.

Mary the Mother of God. Pray for him. St Peter. Pray for him. St John Paul II. Pray for him, Pope Saint Leo the Great, pray for him.

+ Rt Rev Paul Swarbrick | Bishop of Lancaster



The day Pope Leo XIV came to Lancaster Cathedral!

Images and stories of the day Pope Leo XIV came to St Peter's Cathedral in Lancaster when Bishop Campbell was ordained in 2008 have been shared around the diocese, after people spotted the future pope among the clergy.

Father Emmanuel Gribben, at Our Lady of Furness shared this historic moment: "Here is our new Pope, Leo XIV (yellow arrow)"

making a visit to Lancaster Cathedral, when he was Superior General of the Augustinian Order. He came to Lancaster for the ordination of Bishop Michael Campbell. The figure the red arrow is pointing to, is me, Father Emmanuel Gribben.

"So we have a historic link to Pope Leo - The Church is a small world. God Bless our Pope!"

'The new Pope saw me ordained in flying visit to city.'



As reported online by BBC News – Moments after Pope Leo XIV appeared on the balcony at St Peter's Basilica in Rome following his dramatic election to the papacy, one retired bishop's thoughts turned back 17 years to a sunny day in Lancashire.

The new pontiff Robert Prevost attended the ordination of Rt Rev Michael Campbell as Bishop of Lancaster in 2008 when he was just a priest on a flying visit to the city's St Peter's Cathedral.

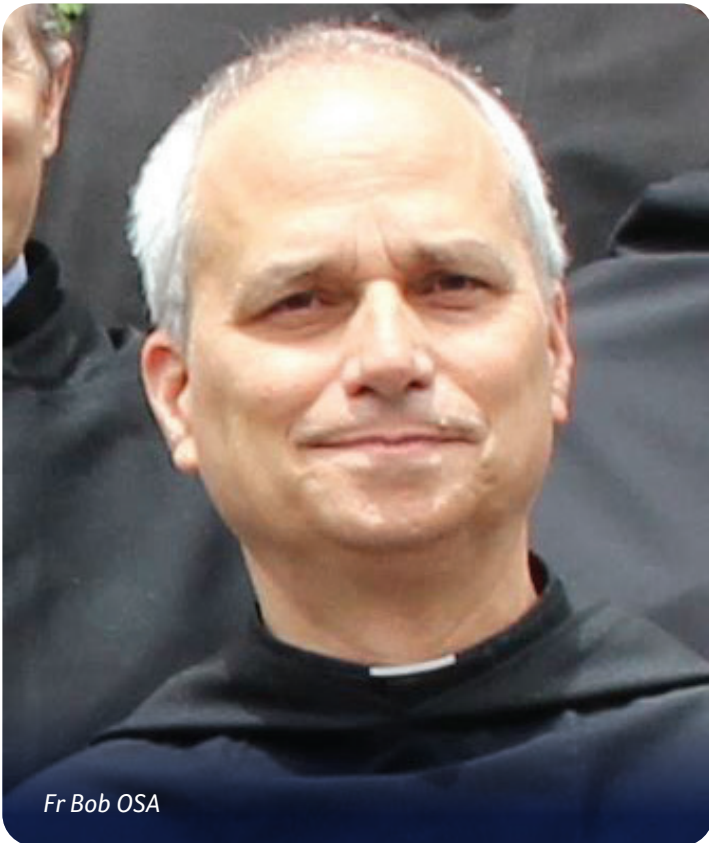
"I knew he was there but I was so caught up in the centre of the celebrations I didn't see him," the now-retired Bishop

Campbell recalled. The 83-year-old said of the new Pope: "He's a fine man and works terribly hard but you would never think he would assume the highest office - Who could have imagined that in 2008?"

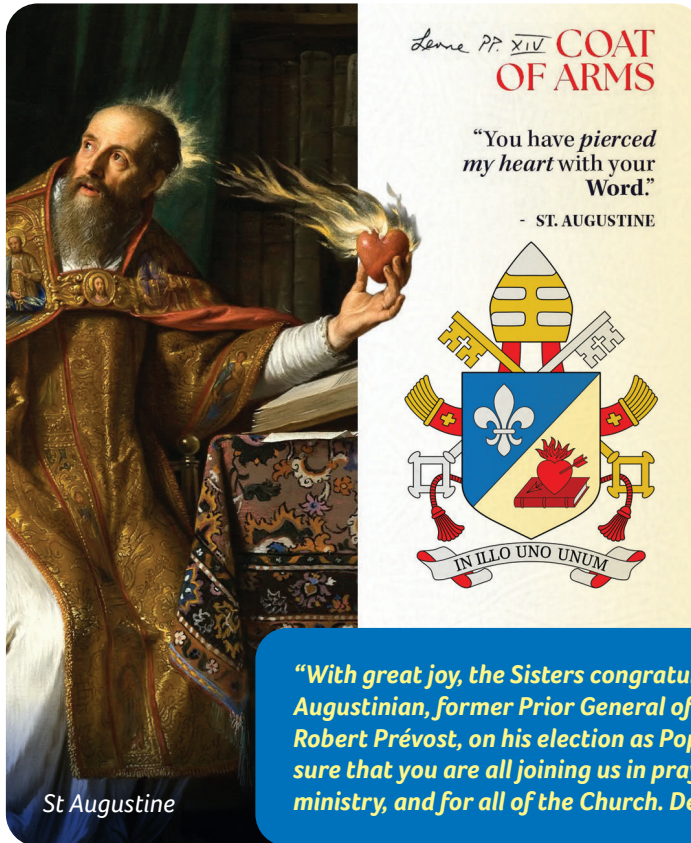
Then a priest, he was jointly-presiding over the bishop's installation, with both men members of the Augustinian Order, a Roman Catholic religious order which the future pope headed from 2001 to 2013. "I have met him many times since then - the last time was in Rome when he was made a cardinal two years ago by the late Pope Francis," Bishop Campbell said. "I do know him well."

Credit: BBC News Online

Habemus Papam Augustinianum!



Fr Bob OSA



St Augustine



(Above) Sister Margaret Atkins OSA Canoness of St Augustine Boarbank Hall.

“With great joy, the Sisters congratulate our brother Augustinian, former Prior General of the Order, Cardinal Robert Prévost, on his election as Pope Leo XIV. We are sure that you are all joining us in praying for him and his ministry, and for all of the Church. Deo gratias!”

Sister Margaret Atkins OSA, Canoness of St. Augustine and theologian, based in the Augustine community at Boarbank Hall, Cumbria, shares her joy at the news of the election of the communities friend and fellow Augustinian, Pope Leo XIV

What was it like for us fellow-Augustinians, when the name of Robert Prevost was announced as the new pope? I don't think I shall ever forget the moment - stuck in a traffic jam on the M6, desperately trying to get a news channel on the mobile phone we had been using as a Satnav, and unable to work out how to turn on the sound!

Fr Robert Prevost was Prior General of the Augustinian Friars for twelve years. We know his brothers in England well, as members of our own Religious family. Two or three of our own Sisters have met him. Suddenly, the papacy felt very close to home, something not only of joy and peace, but a part of normal life.

One of our Sisters wrote:

“When I watched the Cardinals come up to make their vow of secrecy at the beginning of the Conclave, there were two faces that had my interest. One was Cardinal Stephen Brislin of South Africa whom I had met at different celebrations.

“The other was Cardinal Robert Prevost whom I had met at a week-long meeting of the Augustinian Federation of Africa in Durban South Africa in January 2002. I had been part of the team that prepared the welcome for the Prior Provincials and Friars in Africa, and delegates from several other religious congregations working in Africa who followed the Rule of St Augustine. We had a week of fraternal exchange and formation in Augustinian Spirituality in an atmosphere of Augustinian friendship.

“The first thing I remember about Fr Prevost was his love and dedication to the people of Peru whom he had had to leave to take up the role of Prior General of the Order. He was a quiet, humble man who was kind and supportive.

“We met him again several years later when he returned to visit the friars in his second term as Prior General. Had I known at the time that one day he would be

Pope Leo XIV I would have taken more careful notes of the details of his visits and made sure I had some good photos!

“When his name was announced it was so strange to see a Pope whom I knew personally. I was very excited but also filled with peace and hope.”

A Friar friend, who preached our own Community retreat recently, sent us his homily for the occasion. He described his emotions on hearing the news: *“Joy, excitement and hope, because I know this man, and I believe that in choosing him the assembled cardinals in the Conclave have given a great gift to the Church.”*

Then he added:

“In the past, when the Prior General was coming, great preparations were made, but with Bob, things were much more low-key. He is an ordinary man with an extraordinary sense of people. He is a gentle man but never afraid to deal with problems. He is a wise and highly intelligent man who displays great humility and simplicity. And, very importantly, he has a great sense of humour - which he will surely need.”

In Cardinal Prevost, the Cardinals have chosen a man with deep roots in three continents, and strong Augustinian connections to the other three, capable of dialogue in many languages, deeply loved and respected by all who know him, with rich experience as a pastor, leader, decision-maker, teacher and preacher.

His choice of name shows his vision, awareness, at a time when the world faces even more ‘new things’ than in time of Leo XIII.

His commitment to the marginalised is steeped in lived experience. His passion for mission is written in his life-story. Journalists love to read papal elections as politics, but God continues to confound them.

The Holy Spirit is clearly at work in the Church: *Deo gratias!*

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Pupils at St William’s Catholic Primary School & Nursery in Pilling, celebrate the news of our new Pope Leo XIV

“We have prayed for His Holiness, the newly elected Pope, Pope Leo XIV. We will continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire and guide our new Pope in all he does.

“The children have followed every step of this special occasion finding out about the process and praying for the Cardinals.

“Father Embery has let us borrow costumes of a Pope and a Papal Swiss Guard, which the children have enjoyed using, and talking about how the people in Rome would be feeling during this time.

“Staff and children at St William’s, Pilling, were excited to follow the election process, watching carefully for the white smoke.”
*Mrs Helen Hogarth,
St William’s Primary School, Pilling*



We shared the excitement, joy and the wonderful surprise of the thousands gathered in St Peter’s Square as the name of our new Pope from both North and South America was announced and when he appeared to speak his message of the peace of the Risen Christ.

He was echoing the last blessing of Pope Francis on Easter Sunday and we knew then he would be a successor to carry on the legacy that Francis has left. His significant choice of name, his rich life experience and his first address that evening inspire us in this Jubilee of Hope.
Sisters Anne Stewart and Philomena Grimley SJHC



Howard brought back some papers for his parishioners to enjoy.

Howard Bancroft, parishioner in the Sacred Heart RC Church, flew to Rome with his daughter Cara especially to take a chance to see the election of the new Pope and was blessed to see the white smoke event:

“It was an amazing experience even after 3 hours of waiting but the crowd was electrifying and we got chatting to a group of young priests on seminary in Rome. It was a moment I will never forget as the whole square was buzzing then a huge cheer erupted and continued for a long time.”
Howard Bancroft

That's the Spirit!



Meet Ursula Walker – New Spiritual Representative for the Diocese Conference Spirituality Committee

Allow me to introduce myself to those of you who do not know me. I am Ursula Walker – a Consecrated Widow – living in Blackpool, so the South of the Diocese. My name was put forward for this job without my knowledge, so it came as a bit of a shock to suddenly started receiving emails from the Bishops' Conference Spirituality Committee. After few months of liaising and praying about this I was officially appointed by Bishop Paul Swarbrick in February of this year.

So who am I?

I am currently working as a counsellor in private practice in Blackpool. In a former life I also used to teach adults for Blackpool Council in Adult, Family and Community Learning, teaching Basic Computing and then, as the role expanded, I developed and wrote courses on Anger, Stress and Anxiety Management. As I got more and more clients for counselling I gave up the teaching so now just concentrate on the counselling.

I am actively involved in my own Deanery (*Blackpool/ Thornton*) and on the Deanery Pastoral Council. Within the Deanery some of us have been following the Synodal process with interest and I am a trained facilitator for Conversations in the Spirit. I also lead Lectio Divina prayer meetings during Advent and in the time after Easter leading up to Pentecost. I am also trying to start up a Medjugorje Prayer Meeting once a month.

So what does this role of Spiritual Representative for the Diocese entail? Not in any particular order:

- To liaise with the Bishops' Conference Spirituality Committee – telling them what is happening with the Diocese and learning from other Dioceses about what they are doing and the sharing of resources.
- To be the coordinator of what is happening within our Diocese.

- To develop spirituality within the Diocese and share resources within Parishes.

What do I mean by Spirituality?

Yes, a good question and one I have been asking myself. I see it as any activity with a focus to bring people closer to Jesus which is above and beyond what usually happens with a parish. So for example, weeks of Guided Prayer, Days of Renewal; Prayer Groups that may happen once a month, etc.

What have I been up to since appointed?

As I said, I live in the South of the Diocese and so I have created a list of what I know is happening in the areas of Blackpool and Preston. There is quite a lot happening but there is no one place where all this information is to be found. My first challenge, I see, is to get a complete list of what is already happening in the Diocese so I know where I am starting from to develop anything.

This is my plea to you in the North, please get in touch with me and let me know what good work you are doing so I can add you to my list.

Sr Micheala Tomlin at Hyning has also been elected onto the National Committee for the next 5 years and so we are going to be working together. Our first task is to get together all those involved in any kind of spirituality and have an initial meeting to see what our starting point is and then be able to look to the future.

If anyone wants to become involved, or just has ideas about what they would like to see happening in the Diocese, please do get in touch. I do not want to be a one-man-band having to think everything up myself! Thank you and I look forward to meeting many of you out and about.

My contact details are if you would like to reach out and get in touch: **Email: uwalker@uwclub.net**
Mobile: 07312 129900

David Pope dip FD MBIFD

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Relics Tour of St Margaret of Scotland, St Andrew and St Columba visits Blackpool

Earlier this year, a small group of pupils from St Cuthbert's and Christ the King Catholic Academies set off on a short but special pilgrimage - to see the relics of St Columba, St Margaret and St Andrew. The group represented the schools' "Spiritual Council" - pupils who care deeply for the prayer life of the school supporting Mrs Smith (Executive Headteacher) to live out their mission daily.

"Each half term the group try to engage in an activity that supports their own spiritual development. This half term it was to visit the relics.

The group gathered at St John Vianney's

Church, Blackpool with Father Simon Hawksworth. After an initial blessing our children entered the church in solemn and reflective mood and gathered for a short Q and A led by Father Simon. The children were filled with facts and eager to share!

After this a short service was held with tuneful song, reflective reading and silent prayer. The children then were given the opportunity to go close to the relics and pray around them. The visit was a truly special and religious experience and one that the children will not forget in a hurry."

Mrs Sarah Smith, Executive Head Teacher, Christ The King Catholic Academy and St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy, Blackpool.

The veneration of the relics of St Margaret of Scotland, St Andrew and St Columba and the casquet containing the relics of these 3 saints associated with Scotland, was visited by hundreds of parishioners over its 3 day visit.

Cora Keenan, a parishioner at St John Vianneys Blackpool said it was a unique experience: "It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the lives of the saints and how we are called to be saints. Thank you to Father Chris Loughran and the Knights of Columba for organising the tour and bringing it to our parish, we were truly blessed."



You are invited to the

Feast of the Sacred Heart School Mass

ST MARGARET MARY CHURCH,
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11AM



St Mary's Catholic Primary School welcomes the Statue of Our Lady of Lourdes

It was both a privilege and an honour for St Mary's Catholic Primary School to receive the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes as part of its pilgrimage around the Diocese of Lancaster.

Headteacher Mrs Douglas shared the joy:

"Our Lady of Lourdes holds a special place in our Diocese and within our school community. We look to her for inspiration and guidance in our daily lives, and we truly treasured the time we were blessed to host the statue."

The school community gathered together for a special welcoming liturgy, where every pupil took part in a heartfelt procession. Each child had lovingly created a flower, which they laid at the feet of the statue while the hymn 'As I Kneel Before You' was sung reverently and with devotion.

A time of prayer and reflection followed, during which the respect and reverence shown by the pupils was deeply moving. In order to fully embrace the spiritual significance of the statue, each class was given dedicated time to visit, reflect, and pray in its presence. This special occasion was a profound reminder of the role Our Lady plays in guiding our faith and the importance of taking time for prayerful reflection in our lives.

*Mrs Danielle Douglas, Headteacher,
St Mary's Primary School, Harrington, Cumbria*



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JUNE IS FOR JESUS!



Pearl Mina, Editor of *The Catholic Voice of Lancaster*, shares the joy of June as we celebrate together, the Feast Day of The Sacred Heart of Jesus on Friday 27th June.

In December of 2023, the Catholic Church officially kicked off the Jubilee of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, commemorating 350 years of devotion to the Sacred Heart and celebrating the anniversary of apparitions of Jesus to St Margaret Mary Alacoque, in Paray-Le-Monial, France.

The Jubilee of The Sacred Heart of Jesus anniversary celebration began on December 27, the date of Jesus’s first apparition to St. Margaret Mary in 1673, and will last until this month on June 27, 2025, on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart and the 350th anniversary of the final apparition.

Though Jesus’s visits to St. Margaret Mary took place centuries ago in a world that looked much different from ours today, the message of the Sacred Heart and the need for such a devotion is as relevant today as ever before. One of Pope Francis parting gifts to the world, and never more timely, is his Encyclical Letter *DILEXIT NOS* on the human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ. At the time of writing the letter, released in October 2024, Pope Francis expressed his hope that the text would invite reflection on aspects of the Lord’s love that could illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal and resonate meaningfully with “a world that seems to have lost its heart.”

The 1673 Apparitions

The encyclical’s release is part of the ongoing celebrations commemorating the 350th anniversary of the first appearance of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in 1673.

The Importance of the Heart
“The symbol of the heart has often been used to express the love of Jesus Christ. Some have questioned whether this symbol is still meaningful today. Yet living as we do in an age of superficiality, rushing frenetically from one thing to another without really knowing why, and ending up as insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market unconcerned about the deeper meaning of our lives, all of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart.” Pope Francis, an extract from *Dilexit Nos*.

“Dilexit Nos”
The words “*Dilexit Nos*” are the first words of the encyclical and mean “He loved us”. They are a reference to Romans 8:37 in which Saint Paul says Christ loved us, making clear that nothing can ever “separate us” from that love (Rom 8:39). The full title of the encyclical is “*Dilexit Nos - Encyclical Letter on the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ.*”

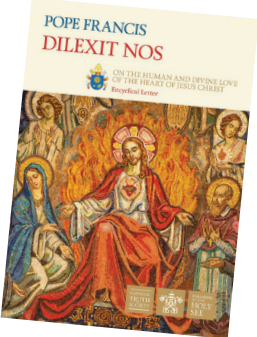
For more information and to watch the Sacred Heart Jubilee Celebrations live in Paray Le Monial visit: SacreCoeur-Paray.org

To read *Dilexit Nos*, a copy can be bought at Covenant Books Preston or visit the CTS Books website: CTS.Books.org



(Main) Sacred Heart of Jesus Mosaic, St Claude La Colombière Chapel, Paray-Le-Monial, France.

(Above) The Mosaic in The Visitation Chapel, Paray-Le-Monial.





(Right top) Stained glass window from inside the church. (Right) The mosaic on the Sacred Heart altar, depicting the appearance of Jesus to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, in the Visitation Chapel at Paray-Le-Monial.

Sacred Heart jubilations as the Historic Sacred Heart Church, Talbot Rd Blackpool, celebrates its 170th Anniversary this year

Canon Robert Dewhurst, parish priest at the Sacred Heart Church, based in the lively town centre in Blackpool, reflects on the popular resort parish's history:

"The history of this church goes back to the middle of the 19th Century and was founded in 1854. It was built through the munificence of the generous lady, Miss Monica Tempest of Broughton Hall, near Skipton. She offered to pay for the building of the church and made it a condition that it must be served by The Society of Jesus, which had long been active in the area.

"On June 7th 1856 the foundation stone was solemnly laid. Edward Pugin, son of Augustus Welby Pugin (the famous architect) designed the original chapel. This consisted of the western part of the present church (to the left of the Talbot Road entrance).

"The Sacred Heart Church formally opened on December 8th 1857. There has been many intricate architectural features built

in and stunning developments adding to the building over the years, including the famous cinema organ, side altars and up grades and renovations. The finer historic milestones and details of which can be found on our website.

"It was around 1993 that English Heritage classified the church as a Grade 2 listed building, that is, a building of exceptional merit and interest. On April 18, 2004 the Jesuits left and the Church is now served by Lancaster Diocese.

"With the support of continued donations and fund raising events, it is hoped that the Sacred Heart church will continue to be a peaceful, sanctuary of prayer & refuge to those in need. We are hoping to mark the 170th anniversary of the Sacred Heart church in some special way later this year and will make an announcement soon.

"We are very fortunate in being able to keep our Church open each day from early morning until about 5.00pm and one of main the reasons we can do this, is because

most of the time there will be people in who are making a visit whilst on holiday in the resort. Some come out of curiosity to admire the beautiful Pugin Architecture and are pleasantly surprised at what they see. But most come to say a prayer, maybe on their way to North Station, others to light a candle in memory of loved ones.

"As well as our loyal regular local parishioners who attend daily Mass and our increasingly popular Sunday noon mass, there are others for which the Sacred Heart church is a reminder of where they attended Mass as visitors to Blackpool years ago, at a time when there were long queues waiting to get in to Mass on a Sunday.

"It stands then, as a witness to the Faith of those who have gone before us and their generosity in building on such a scale. The effects of the wind and the salt air have taken their toll. Hopefully now and in the future, it will continue to provide a place of peace, prayer and refuge amid the clamour and noise of this busy and bustling seaside setting."

A Special Mass for the Solemnity of The Sacred Heart of Jesus will be celebrated at 12 Noon on Friday 27th June, in honour of the feast day and also in recognition of the 170th anniversary. All are welcome to attend. For further information on the 170th Anniversary please follow our Facebook page and website for updates:

www.sacredheartchurchblackpool.com



"O Sacred Heart of Jesus I Place All My Trust in Thee." Canon Robert Dewhurst



Pope Francis Remembered



Remembering Pope Francis through reflection and prayers at the special Requiem Mass at Lancaster Cathedral 28th April 2025

The life and legacy of Pope Francis was celebrated in a solemn Requiem Mass at Lancaster Cathedral.



Canon Paul Embery & Canon Chris Loughran meet and greet with a warm welcome.



A solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated at Lancaster Cathedral on April 28th, for the repose of the soul of Pope Francis. People from many parishes across the Diocese, along with various ecumenical clergy, Bishops, Canons and civic leaders, gathered to remember him and pay their respects. The chief celebrant was Bishop Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster.

In his tender and moving homily, Bishop Paul Swarbrick, spoke of Pope Francis enduring legacy:

"I believe his legacy will be rich and of increasing value as the years unfold. We will continue to draw strength and guidance from his ministry. He has remained true to the tradition handed to him by Pope Benedict XVI and about to be handed on to an, as yet unknown, pope."

"In conclusion, let us be aware of how he was able to fulfil his ministry of unity and fidelity only because he regularly withdrew from the world into deep, personal prayer. He was only able to hear Jesus say: 'come

to me, follow me', because he took time out to pray – time when he could have been busy with so many worthy causes, so many individuals in need of his company. In this, he truly followed Jesus who constantly turned his back on the crowds in order to turn his ear to the Father whose mission He was on.

"Picture that intimate one-to-one, Francis and Jesus, 'Francis do you love me? Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, follow me.'

"And he has shown us that each of us has the chance and obligation to do the same.

"That Jesus might ask us if we love Him, so that we may know He loves us, and so may others who have yet to meet Him. Drawn into the conversation with the hand who refuses to let sin win, who constantly is the answer to the problem – there must be another way. I am the Way, follow me.

"Be touched by him and his life. Go and live yours. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them."



Damien Howard, Director of Music.



Karen Jones, Assistant to the Director of Music conducting the choir.

and Celebrated ...





Saying Goodbye



Stephen Bamber is a seminarian for the Diocese of Lancaster. He is based at the Parish of St. John Henry Newman in Morecambe and is studying at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome. Before entering priestly formation, Stephen worked in the drug and alcohol treatment sector in a variety of roles. Stephen is due to be ordained to the diaconate at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome on June 18th. Please keep Stephen and all our seminarians and those discerning a vocation to the priesthood in your prayers.

St. Peter's Basilica exercises a powerful draw on the heart, mind and soul. That was particularly apparent at the passing of Pope Francis, when people from all over the world descended on the Eternal City to honour a pontiff loved and respected by so many.

nonchalance was replaced by reverence and quiet reflection. Pope Francis had a gift of being able to speak directly into people's hearts. People were truly grieving, mourning the loss of someone who had touched their lives, often in deeply personal ways, throughout his pontificate.

The Beda College is about 7km from St. Peter's Square. Rather than risk getting public transport on the morning of the funeral, I decided to take the route on the cycle path that runs alongside the Tiber, which I reckoned would be the quietest route into the city on this unusual morning.

As soon as the choir began to chant the entrance antiphon, all eyes became fixed on the large screens, and the cacophony of expectant voices from myriad corners of the world was silenced. If you watched the funeral service back home, you know how moving the liturgy was.

The sky was clear and blue, spring flowers were coming into bloom along the riverbank and on the mighty Tiber walls. Cascades of purple bougainvilleas streamed from walls and balconies, and the unmistakable scent of flowering jasmine was ever-present. Even the Tiber itself – usually a murky green-grey – was sparkling cheerfully in the light of this solemn morning. I have never seen Rome looking so beautiful.

The atmosphere amongst the crowd was extraordinary. Groups of young people and families prayed the Mass together. Friends embraced and comforted one another. The emergency services, first aiders, civil protection officers—a whole host of organisations and groups were quietly being of service. During the Eucharistic Prayer, children knelt reverently alongside their parents and friends.

I came up off the river at the staircase at the foot of Castel Sant'Angelo into a city transformed. The Via della Consolazione was swarming with the hustle and bustle of groups from around the world. One of the miracles of Pope Francis' passing is how many pilgrims were here in Rome at this time. Some were here to celebrate Easter in Rome, others were here for the Jubilee, many thousands of young people were here for the canonisation of Blessed Carlo Acutis, and some had descended on Rome as soon as they heard of the death of Pope Francis, just to be here and say goodbye to a friend.

At one point, during the Litany of the Saints, I gazed up at the clear blue sky and was filled with peace. Although the secular media can be quick to underline divisions in the Church and foster uncertainty, under the warmth of the spring sun, the Holy Spirit was strongly present, uniting us in our grief and setting hearts on fire with devotion and love.

In a sense, Pope Francis' funeral was his final act of charity. On that radiant spring morning, the Church was a vibrant witness to the same hope that Pope Francis so often proclaimed: both a divine gift and a responsibility for us 'Pilgrims of Hope' to undertake. *Pope Francis, pray for us.*

Stephen Bamber, Seminarian for the Diocese of Lancaster, Rome, May 13th 2025



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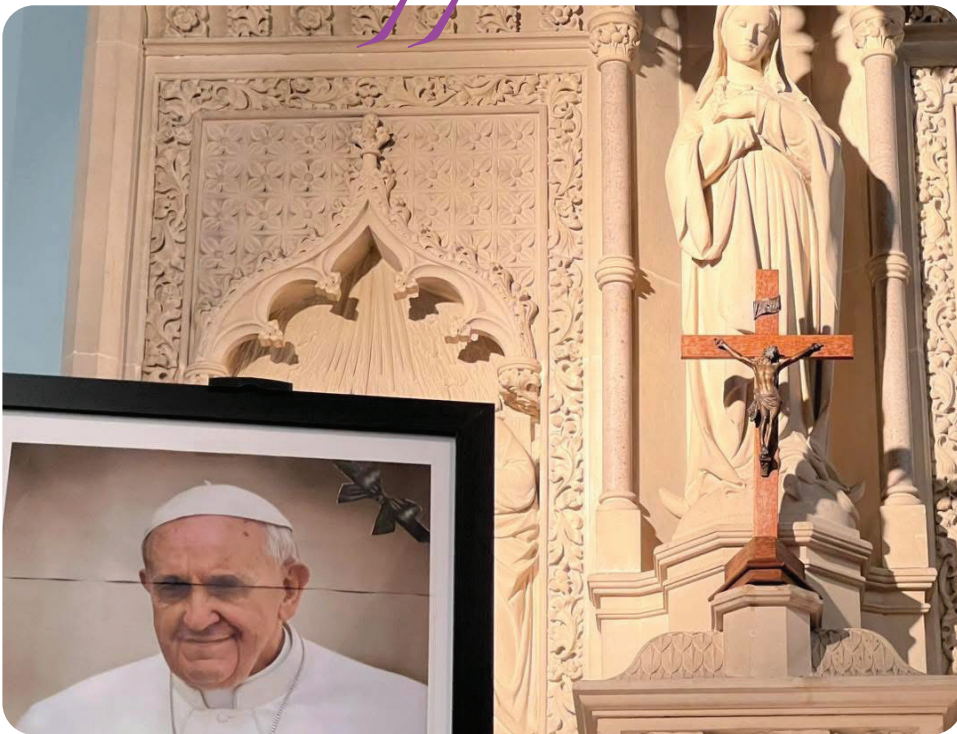
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An Appreciation

by Fr Stephen Pearson



As Catholics, we have just passed through the unsettling period from the death of a sitting Pope through to the election and proclamation of his successor. When the Cardinal Deacon stood on the central balcony of St Peter's Basilica and declared the name the new pontiff, it reminded me, for one, of when Jorge Cardinal Bergoglio's election was proclaimed and he took the papal name of Pope Francis. I can't have been the only person who said out loud "Who?" Very quickly I, and we, found out who Pope Francis was and the qualities which made him stand out amongst recent occupants of the papal identity.

Soon after his election the news came that Pope Francis would not be living within the Vatican papal palace but rather living in the simpler apartment in the Sancta Martha accommodation and it set a direction for his papal mission. Cardinal Bergoglio already had a reputation as a very humble unassuming man which followed him from his life as Archbishop of Buenos Aires (*where he was nick-named locally as "the Bishop of the Slums" because of his devotion to the poor of the shantytowns*). Unassuming he continued to be, but he clearly had a powerful vision of how Christian life was to be lived and witnessed, especially by the chief shepherd, the successor of St Peter, the Vicar of Christ on earth.

From the choice of where and how he was to live and the content of his first encyclical "*Lumen Fidei*", through to his more challenging teachings in documents such as "*Amoris Laetitia*" (*The joy of Love*) and his encyclical on the care for our common home, planet earth, "*Laudato Si*" Pope Francis touched important moments in the life of faith and in the story of human development.

He reminded us many times of the place of Christ in human identity, and how lost we are without Him. His persistence with

the process of the Synodality is still being discerned and it displays a powerful desire to involve the holy people of God in discerning the will of the Holy Spirit for the church. More recently his weeks of treatment and relapse because of severe ill health reminded me of St John Paul II, in that both men served the Lord and his church in their frailty and infirmity. Pope Francis appearing on the balcony of St Peter's on Easter Sunday to give the traditional "*Urbi et Orbi*" blessing, then to popemobile through the people in the square I found a deeply moving sight. The very next day, news came of his death.

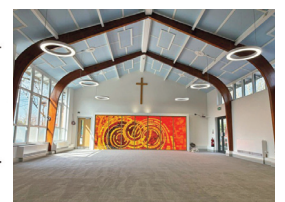
What a fitting conclusion to his gifted life dedicated to serving The Lord and his Church.

I will end this appreciation recollecting a video clip I saw on You Tube and elsewhere on the net. It showed Pope Francis in an audience outside a building responding to questions from children. One little boy had the simplest yet profound question for the pope. Recently this little boy's father had taken his own life, and he asked the pope if he would see him in heaven? Before he could begin asking the question the little boy was already upset, possibly over awed by the occasion. The Pope was sitting on a slightly raised platform with a few officials. He asked the officials to stand back and beckoned the child to come to him. He cuddled him and cherished him and began answering his question in action and with words, and spent a good deal of time with him, then applauded him as he returned to his family who were only a few feet away. Words and actions... maybe a simple phrase to sum up what we encountered in the life of Pope Francis. It also reminded me of words attributed to St Francis of Assisi, who so inspired the Pope: "*Preach the gospel! and if you have to, use words*".

*Fr Stephen Pearson, May 2025
Ecclesiastical Advisor,
The Catholic Voice of Lancaster*



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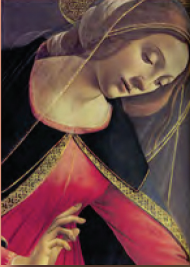
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John Bradburne Memorial Society

**JOHN BRADBURNE PILGRIMAGE
WALK 2025**
Saturday 6th September 2025

This year JBMS will climb Melmerby Fell - about 5 km northwest of Cross Fell and the same distance from Skirwith where John was born and spent his early childhood.

We start in Melmerby Village and take a good farm track east though the path is indistinct from above 300m. After reaching the top at Dun Edge 709m we walk south joining an old Roman Road - Maiden Way - for a little while before descending SW to Fellside Farm. The last part to Fellside is not a right of way but the farmer has very kindly given us permission.

We will have arranged for some cars to be at either end of the walk to carry people back to Melmerby. (It is possible to follow footpaths from Fellside back to Melmerby but route finding is tricky and not recommended).

11km and 567m of ascent - a shorter walk than Cross Fell which will take between 4 and 5 hours with a stop for lunch and prayers. You will need to be fairly fit and dressed for a partly boggy walk and possibly a cold wind.

Before the walk, there will be mass held at St John the Evangelist Church, Skirwith, CA10 1RQ where John's father was the vicar and where John was baptised. All are welcome. (By kind permission of the Church of England Diocese of Carlisle)

After the walk there will be tea, talks and an exhibition of John's life in Skirwith Village Hall.

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Floral splendour marks Easter celebrations at St Kentigern's, Blackpool

This Easter, the parish community of St Kentigern's Church in Blackpool was welcomed by a beautiful display of flowers, carefully arranged by a dedicated team of parishioners who gave their time and talents to prepare the church for the most important season in the Christian calendar.

Siobhan Tweedale, parishioner and part of the busy St Kentigern's Crafts & Creativity Flower Team was delighted with this years display and team work:

"The Easter decorations this year were a beautiful blend of joyful and reflective touches expressed through a vibrant palette of gold, white, and green—colours rich in symbolism for resurrection, purity, and new life. Among the many highlights was a giant Easter Egg arrangement, creatively crafted by recycling copies of The Catholic Voice of Lancaster newspaper. This imaginative display captured the attention of young and old alike, with children especially delighted to find playful Easter bunnies nestled around

it. Beyond its charm, the feature also offered a gentle reminder of the importance of caring for God's creation through reusing and repurposing materials.

In a deeply moving addition to the Easter celebrations, a special memorial tribute was prepared to mark the passing of Pope Francis on Easter Monday. Displayed prominently, it offered a quiet and dignified space for prayer, remembrance, and reflection, uniting the parish community in both sorrow and hope.

Throughout the Easter season, services at St Kentigern's were marked by profound spirituality and a renewed sense of community, offering parishioners and visitors alike the chance to experience the hope and new life promised by the Resurrection.

St Kentigern's extends heartfelt thanks to all who generously contributed their time, talent, resources, and creativity to make Easter 2025 such a memorable and meaningful celebration."
Siobhan Tweedale, St. Kentigern's Crafts & Creativity Flower Team

Prayer for World Communication Day

O God, whose word is truth and in whose light we see light, guide those who tell the story of our times through word and image. Make them seekers after truth and advocates of human dignity.

Grant discernment to all who rely on their labours, and, as we confront the pain and promise of this world, awaken in us a sense of wonder at your presence and of longing for your peace.

We ask this 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.

“Our first duty is to communicate the beauty and joy of knowing Jesus.” Pope Leo XVI

**Pope Leo XVI
Official Portrait:**



Leo P.P. XVI

Happy World Communication Day Sunday 1st June

+ Rt Rev Bishop Paul Swarbrick shares his blessings to all, to make good use our “Catholic Voice”.

I want to send out a word of encouragement for the *Catholic Voice of Lancaster*. It has an essential place in our work as a Diocese, helping to share the joy of the Gospel as we try to do what the Lord commanded His first disciples – to proclaim the Good News of Christ’s resurrection. I speak for us all in commending Edwina Gillett for her outstanding professionalism over many years producing a local Diocesan newspaper that has rightly earned high respect for the quality it has maintained. Now the work has been picked up in a competent and enthusiastic way by Pearl Mina and a small team of willing assistants.

We have a beautiful Diocese in an outstanding part of the UK. We are, however, very spread out. It is so valuable to know something of what is going on in far-flung corners of the Diocese, in Parishes, Schools and groups. It picks up on what individuals are doing to live their faith. It captures hopes for the future and gratitude for the past. We are never

competing to outshine others. That is not the culture of the Gospel. Rather, it serves to lift us and to build our confidence as we see examples of what faith in Christ means to people and see what a difference faith makes.

Not everyone is comfortable looking at screens or scrolling news on the internet. Printed stories retain their relevance.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope and our own Centenary Year I encourage our parishes to promote the *Catholic Voice of Lancaster* pro-actively. I’m conscious – having been a parish priest – that the arrival of a stack of newspapers can be rather frustrating. Getting them out to people can seem a chore, but it’s an important one. Don’t overlook it as a way of helping sick, elderly and housebound Catholics to keep in touch. And don’t overlook the possibility of sharing your own news too!

With my blessing,
**+ Rt Rev Paul Swarbrick
Bishop of Lancaster**



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.

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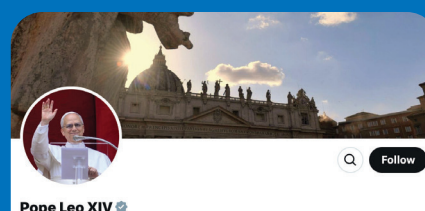


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The Vatican announced that Pope Leo XIV has decided to “maintain an active presence on social media through official papal accounts” on X @Pontifex and Instagram, creating a new one for the latter platform.

In a statement May 13, the Dicastery for Communication said “Leo XIV inherits the X @Pontifex accounts used by Pope Francis and previously by Benedict XVI,” and a new account has also been opened on Instagram. “On Instagram, the new pope’s account is called @Pontifex – Pope Leo XIV, and is the only official account of the Holy Father on this platform in continuity with Pope Francis’ account, @Franciscus,” the dicastery noted, adding that the content published by Pope Francis on X “will soon be archived in the appropriate section of the Holy See’s institutional website,” - Vatican.va. It also added that “the content published on the @Franciscus account will continue to be accessible as an ‘Ad Memoriam’ commemorative archive.”

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Jubilee Walk of Hope at St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Blackpool



As part of the Jubilee Year of Hope, primary school pupils at St Bernadette's RC Primary School, Bispham, pledged to undertake a virtual Lenten Pilgrimage of Hope walk to the Vatican City, at the school.

Mrs Alexis Satterthwaite, Headteacher at St Bernadette's was delighted with the success of the event:

"The Jubilee of Hope Vatican pilgrimage walk was a great success and the pupils all got enthusiastically involved. Each child and staff member walked 5 laps of the sports track, each Friday in Lent. It was a very interactive experience in which the path they took became a re-imagining of Rome and the Vatican."

"It was a lovely family atmosphere where the older children took care of the younger

pupils, with great care and compassion. Back in school, the pupils learned all about the Vatican and the Pope on a PowerPoint presentation and tracked their walk, step by step, through European cities, stopping at Paris along the way. It was a very exciting, immersive and enriching experience when they finally arrived at the Vatican.

"'Luce', the Vatican's Jubilee mascot - which means 'light' in Italian - headed the walk each Friday with our decorated banner. We chose a child from each class to lead the walk and 'Luce' spent time in each class.

"The pupils learned what it was like to walk together as pilgrims, come rain or shine and we are very proud of their achievement and taking an active part in the Jubilee Year of Hope."

*Alexis Satterthwaite, Headteacher
St Bernadette's RC Primary School*



Pupils at St Bernadette's RC Primary School leading the Jubilee Walk of Hope.

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