

The Catholic  **VOICE** *of Lancaster*

The Official Newspaper to
the Diocese of Lancaster
Issue 259 + May 2014

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Proclaim the Good News

Heavenly Father, Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire me with these words from Holy Scripture. Stir in my soul the desire to renew my faith and deepen my relationship with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ so that I might truly believe in and live the Good News. Open my heart to hear the Gospel and grant me the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others. Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life through my words and actions. In moments of hesitation, remind me:

*If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?
If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?
If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?*

God, our Father, I pray that through the Holy Spirit I might hear the call of the New Evangelization to deepen my faith, grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel, and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

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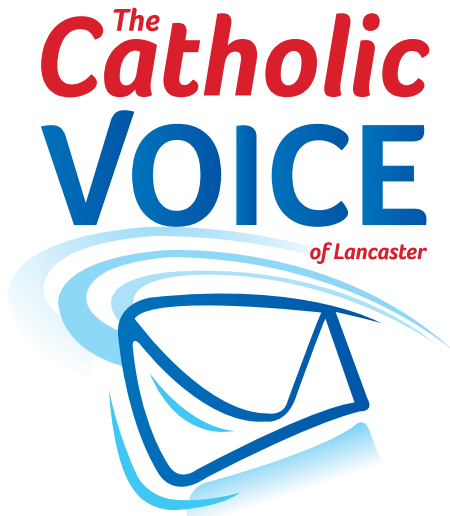
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The Catholic Voice of Lancaster is published on the last Sunday of the month previous to publication date.

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.

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01253 730343
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PUBLISHED BY:

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

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voicenews@hotmail.co.uk

Letters to:

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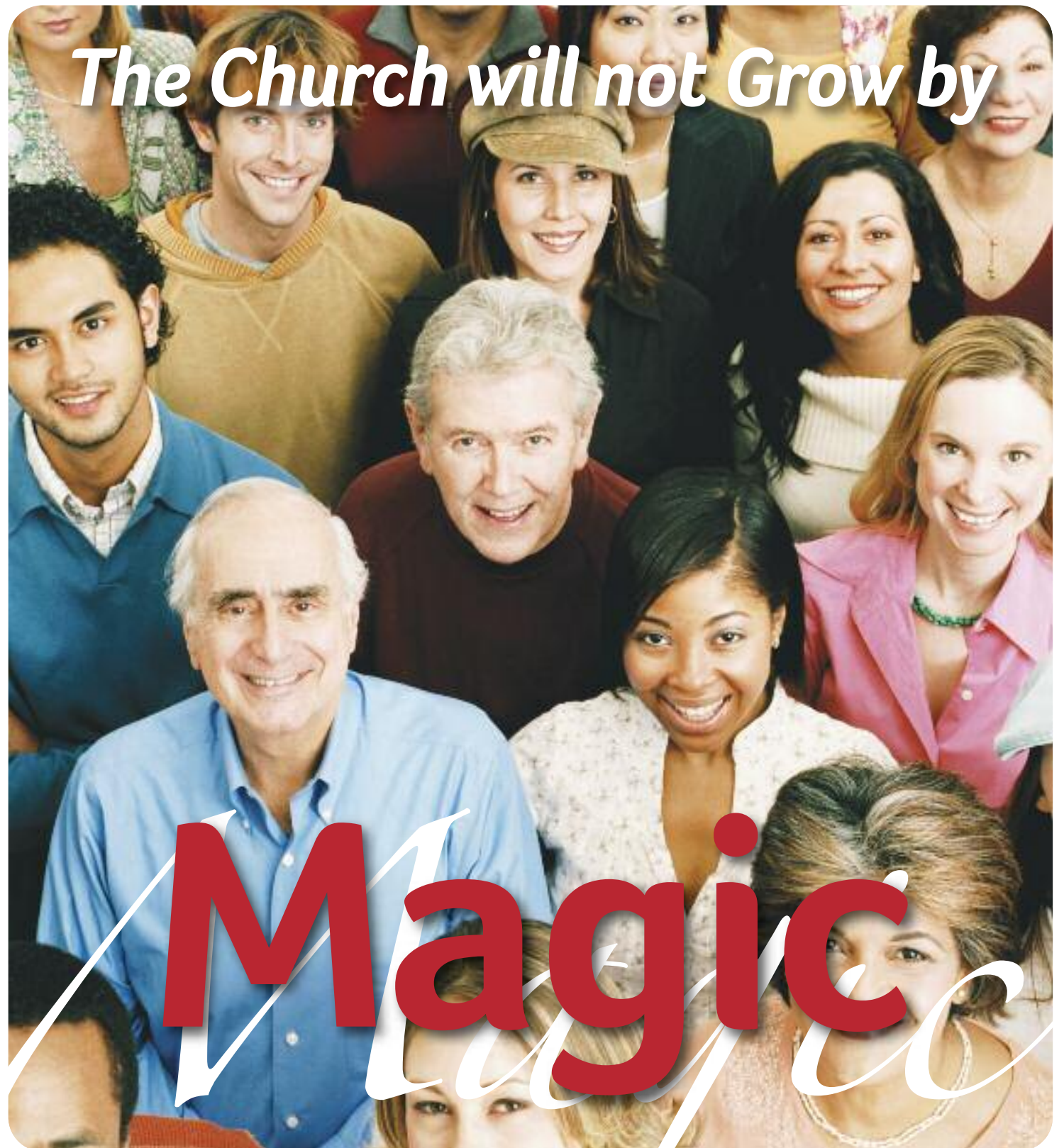
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EDITORIAL

This Easter about fifty adults were received into the Church in our diocese. The *Catholic Voice* would like to congratulate them for the courageous way they have stood out in our times and the generosity with which they have responded to the Lord's call within them. There is nothing more invigorating to the local Church than to be able to welcome new members; the journey of the Elect inspires, challenges and renews the commitment of the whole Christian Community.

We thank God for these fifty, but what have we made of the Church in this part of the world that it is only fifty? On the day of Pentecost alone three thousand were added to the number of disciples. Christ's mandate was to go to the ends of the earth, to proclaim the Good News, and to baptise people in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, reminding us that He would be with us till the end of time. But **when was the last time any of us proclaimed the Good News to a friend, to a colleague, to a stranger, and would we even know what to say if we were asked? How many people have we accompanied on their journey towards baptism? Does our faith mean that little to us that we are afraid to share it with others? Do we trust the Lord enough to know that He is with us till the end of time and that He will sustain us in fulfilling His mandate?**

The *Catholic Voice* believes it is a cause of shame that the statistics for the numbers of those received into our parishes seems to be no longer recorded in our diocesan directory for fear of an embarrassment of numbers. **A stark choice is being held before the local Church of Lancaster: will the faithful remnant be midwives, bringing to birth new life within the Church, or have we resigned ourselves to become undertakers, burying the last vestiges of a tired and worn-out religion?** How tragic it

would be for a Church that survived the era of martyrdom and torture subsequently to fade from history because all our efforts are concentrated on the maintenance of our tangible assets, buildings and structures rather than the passing on of the true Faith.

We can be sure of one thing: the Church will not grow by magic. St Paul exhorts us to cast aside the thinking of the world and to put on the mind of Christ, to be aglow with the Spirit and to be generous-hearted, reaching out to those around us, especially the poorest of the poor. In these tumultuous times, the Church has been blessed by the courageous witness of St John Paul II, the profound teaching of Pope Benedict XVI, and the charismatic personality of Pope Francis who on a daily basis shows us what it is to be alive in our faith. They follow in the footsteps of St Peter who only discovered what faith was when he stepped out of the boat and started to walk on the water. In taking the risk, he experienced the power of the Lord. Distracted by the waves and wind and his own disbelief, he began to sink. But in that moment Peter experienced something far greater than himself: Jesus' all-encompassing power and love. How much we defend ourselves against experiencing this power working through us, and how little we know God's mercy and love, because we have never allowed ourselves to experience it.

The *Catholic Voice* exhorts all the Holy People of God in this Easter Season to cling to the Risen Lord, to touch his sacred wounds, to allow our hearts to burn with the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to feast upon the Lamb that was slain and yet is alive. Renewed in strength, let us use these, the 'last days', this favourable time, to prepare for the renewal of the Holy Spirit and to make as our priority - becoming missionary disciples, knowing that **there is only one sadness in life, and that is not to become a saint.**

'Cadwallan'

What do priests do with their spare time? Many repair to the golf course or go walking but Fr David Branford, Chaplain, Lancaster Farms Young Offenders Institute, has taken to writing and has recently published his first novel 'Cadwallan.' The book has been well received and has been favourably reviewed by a number of readers. It is available on Amazon for £1.03.

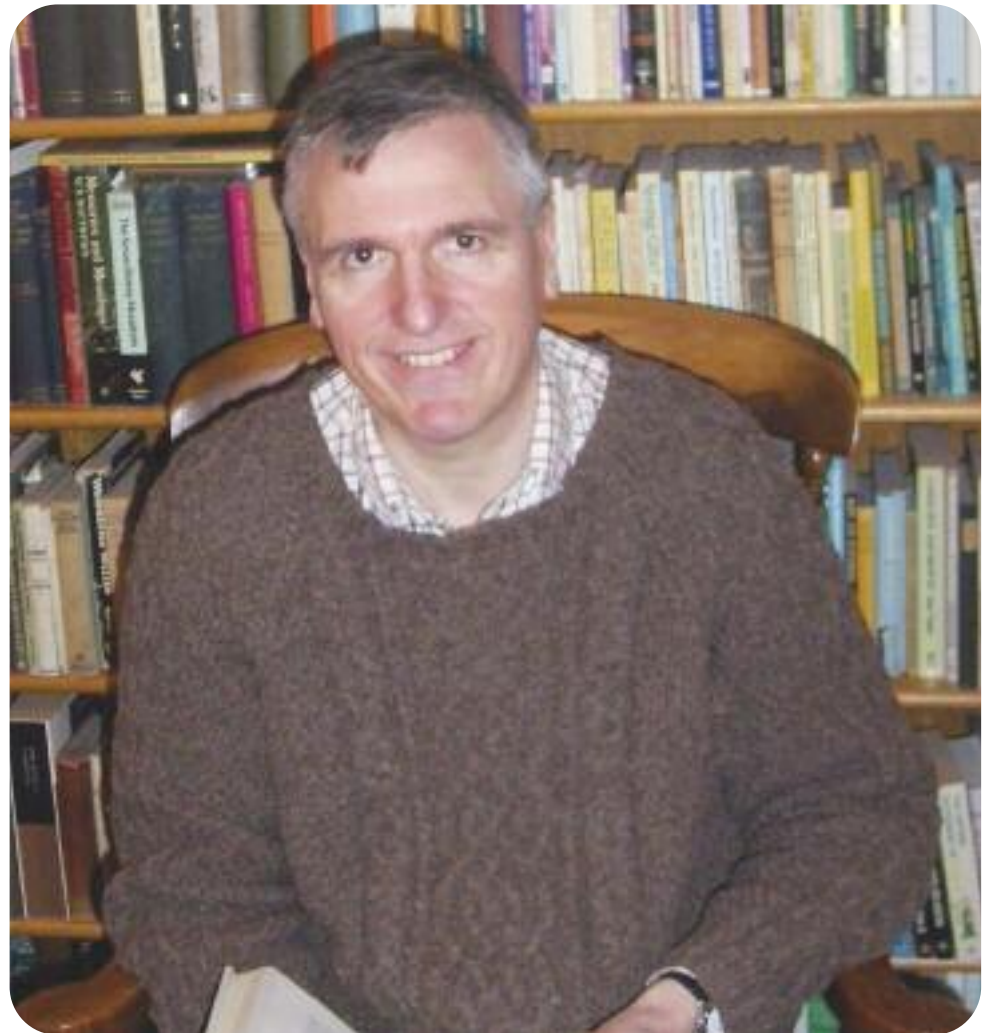
The Story

This has at its heart a triangular friendship formed between three Oxford students, Tom Bowen, Josef von Holtz and Lydia Fairhurst, in the closing years of the 1930s. After finishing their studies, they meet up for a holiday in the Pembrokeshire village of St Dugain's, where Tom has roots, for a get-together before going their separate ways. Tom shares with his friends the ancient love story of Cadwallan and Morwenna, having no idea that in so doing he has inadvertently sown seeds which will resurface in a wartime

German plot to undermine British morale.

Prior to the outbreak of war, Tom travels through France and Germany and a reunion with Josef does not end happily. After the declaration of war, Tom and Lydia are independently recruited for clandestine work in France but a more sinister threat on the Home Front sees them diverted back to Wales where the isolated coastline of Pembrokeshire has been infiltrated by a small band of German soldiers. The story reaches its climax on a deserted beach where Tom and Josef come face to face again, the old ties of friendship counting for nothing.

This is an espionage story but it is also a romance. Though not specifically a Christian novel, it belongs to the genre of Christian writing, challenging some of the norms of much modern literature by its avoidance of sex and bad language. The book was written with an adult readership in mind but would certainly be accessible to teenage readers as well.



God's boxes

I have in my hands two boxes, Which God gave me to hold. He said, "Put all your sorrows in the black box, And all your joys in the gold."

I heeded His words, and in the two boxes Both my joys and sorrows I stored. But though the gold became heavier each day. The black was as light as before. With curiosity, I opened the black, I wanted to find out why, And I saw, in the base of the box, a hole Which my sorrows had fallen out by. I showed the hole to God, and mused, "I wonder where my sorrows could be." He smiled a gentle smile and said, "My child, they're all here with me."

I asked God why He gave me the boxes, Why the gold, and the black with the hole? "My child, the gold is for you to count your blessings, The black is for you to let go."

Anon

24 Hours for the Lord

Responding to a Pontifical Council for the Laity Ladyewell Shrine, Fernyhalgh, Preston held a 24 hour Exposition Of the Blessed Sacrament closing with Benediction on 28 March. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was available throughout the 24 hours and so too were refreshments.



Photograph courtesy of the Bishop's Blog



PERFORMERS took to the stage when Corpus Christi Catholic High School hosted the annual 'Stars in Their Eyes' performance to raise money for a good cause.

After months of rehearsals and perfecting their acts, pupils from all year groups entertained a sold-out hall over several days. Singing, dancing and comedy stand ups were all part of the 15 act line up during the three 'heats' which were held during lunchtimes.

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Being a Young Catholic Today

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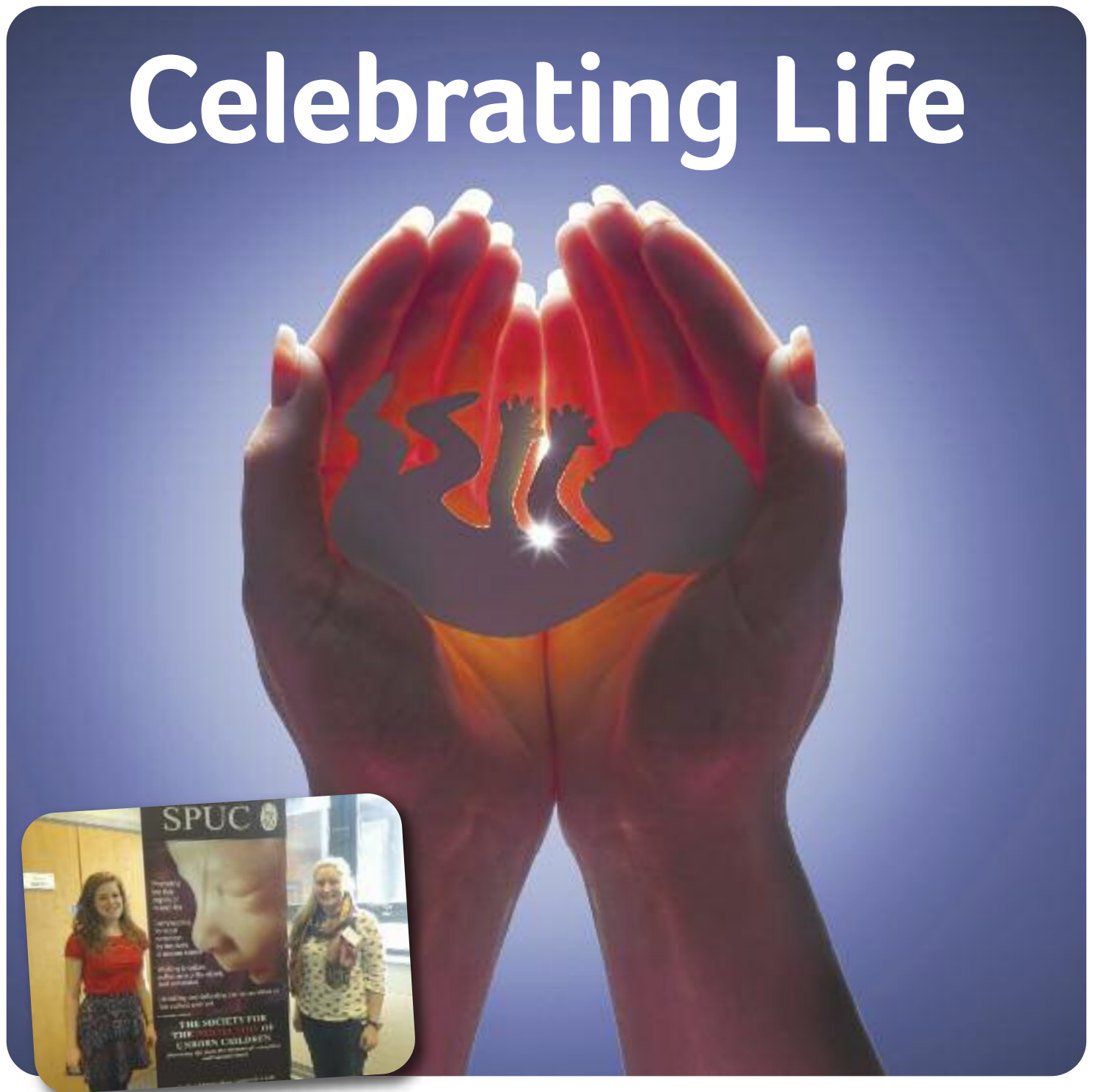


Part of something **HUGE!**

I never really appreciated my faith. I was born into a Catholic family, so going to the Neo-Catechumenal Way and Church was pretty much the norm.

In times of trouble I knew I could always turn to God for help. My beliefs were never something to hide. But when other people such as friends or acquaintances found out that I was a Catholic there would be mixed reactions. Some would be cool with it, but others would say things such as, "So, you go to Church every Sunday?" with a puzzled expression on their faces. I would go a deep shade of red, mumble a "yes" and shuffle away. Someone even refers to me as their 'Catholic' friend! (I guess I should take that as a complement!) But when someone looks at you like you're an alien just because you believe in something they don't, it kind of hurts.

I soon discovered that day after day, week after week I was becoming ashamed of my faith. But in 2012 that all changed. I went to an event called "Flame" which brought young members of the Church together to listen to inspirational people in Wembley Arena. As I stepped into the arena I saw over 10,000 young people smiling and enjoying themselves. I just felt so happy! I wasn't alone; I'm part of something huge! I learnt so much that day and I'm truly grateful to every single one of those 10,000 people for showing me that I'm part of a beautiful community. I discovered that sometimes I just have to push everything into God's hands and take a leap!



Four young people from our diocese participated in the recent SPUC Youth Conference and here they share their experiences:

Sophie, who is studying at Lancaster, writes, 'As a university student it can be difficult to hold a pro-life position. Sometimes I feel surrounded by attitudes that seem so against this 'culture of life' we try so hard to promote. However, the SPUC youth conferences always give me the inspiration and knowledge I need to carry on in this fight for life.'

The SPUC talks allowed young people to connect, to get to know others with the same attitudes over the weekend; and what better way to relax and shake-off after a full day of lectures than a ceilidh? It's important for us to know that there are others out there who love life, in all its forms, just as much as we do!

Nichola from Blackpool, reflected upon 'the three speakers I found especially inspiring, who really opened my eyes to certain issues that I'd never quite thought about in the same way. First there was Dr William Newton, who spoke about the vital link between contraception and abortion, that they were not just fruits of the same tree but one was the fruit of the other. There was also Fiorella

Nash, a pro-life feminist, who spoke about the impact of abortion on men, which I'm ashamed to say is something I'd never thought about before. John-Henry Westen, founder of LifeSiteNews.com, spoke about the misrepresentation of pro-lifers by the media, and reinforced the importance of communicating the pro-life message with love and compassion not just for the unborn child, but for the opposition as well.

The passion of the speakers was infectious. I was particularly inspired by the final talk given by the director of SPUC, John Smeaton, who maintained that the world can't and won't be changed by politicians, but only by the conversion of hearts and minds. It affirmed for me the importance of my Christian vocation, to defend human life and live by example.

I left the SPUC conference with a strong conviction; yes I am pro-life, and I feel empowered with a sense of duty to deliver the pro-life message by living a life of love, witness and concern for each and every single human life, whether it be inside and outside the womb'.

Patricia who is currently at Castlerigg, added, 'A big thank you to Fleetwood SPUC and especially to Audrey Armor in supporting the cost. Keep up the good work!'



Catholic and proud of it!

- Flame 2 and WYD Krakow coming soon!



In this month's Being a Young Catholic column, Rachael speaks of the impact of the Flame Event in Wembley Arena in London.

In a world where young Catholics often feel isolated and where faith is little talked about, events such as Flame, Lourdes and World Youth Day, are a special encouragement, helping young people to develop a Catholic identity. Not only are these events an encouragement to those who holding to their faith by the grit of their teeth, but for many who have come from no faith background in their families, such events can be the catalyst for conversion.

In the Youth Service we know several young people who have

come to their faith through such events and have since been received into the Church and are playing their full part.

Next year Wembley Arena will be hosting Flame 2 on 7 March and the Youth Service will be taking a coach down to the event and enjoying a weekend in London together.

Also next year, events will be held to prepare young people to participate in the next World Youth Day which will be taking place in St John Paul II's Krakow.

If you or your parish would like to reserve some places for these events, please contact the Youth Service as soon as possible on team@castleriggmanor.co.uk or phone 017687 72711.



Divine Blogger

I've attempted to write a blog about 3 or 4 times before, but this one has been the only one I have shown any kind of commitment to. Maybe it is the subject that I write about: 'My Faith' is the most important part of my life and so it's easy to write about that.

I don't really know why I write. Sometimes I just have great ideas (or at least I think they're great) and I want to get them down because other people should know them too. Usually when I start writing I have no idea what I am going to write – it just comes out. I write the title and then everything just flows and ideas come into my head. It feels quite inspired really. I write about a range of topics, usually Catholic teaching, but one thing I really enjoy writing is my poetry. I feel that with poetry, anyone can read and take something away from it – no one is put off by a poem. It's not intimidating; people can't attack a poem because it's more personal and written from the heart.

In some of my other posts I have been opposed, and, in some cases, attacked. People are entitled to disagree but it's interesting to see which parts they disagree with. I find that the most truthful part of my writing is what people find most challenging. Sometimes I feel like I should delete a post because I have received a negative comment calling me 'narrow minded' or, in some cases, quite vulgar things. In those times I have to remember John 15:18, "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me before you."

I don't write blog posts to be hated by the world. Ideally that wouldn't happen, but writing posts online is a great way to reach out to a whole new audience. I know people have read my posts who I would have never been able to tell about my faith before, people from my home town, people from all over the world.

I have only been writing my blog for 6 weeks and already have over 800 reads. That means 800 people have read about Our Lord, Our Lady, and even Stephen Tallbut (a Diocesan Seminararian).

Many of those will be people who have looked for the blog, but some stumble across it accidentally, and before you know it, they have an opportunity to meet Christ, and that is beautiful. Check out Richard's blog on <http://richyaugustine.wordpress.com>

Richard, 20, Workington

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Sometimes life is hard and we can get lost in the daily grind of making ends meet, of getting things done, and forgetting to 'smell the roses'.

Then, quite suddenly, a change occurs through a little show of affection: a kiss, a hug or a loving gesture from my beloved. As a result life is transformed. We feel so much brighter; the sun is shining, it's great to be alive and all is well in my little world.

When we take the trouble to reveal the true nature of our love for each other, there will be a real transformation in our relationship. Each married couple has experienced this at sometime in their lives together. The question we have to ask ourselves is this: if this is all true, if this is how we become better wives and husbands, why are we not doing it all the time?

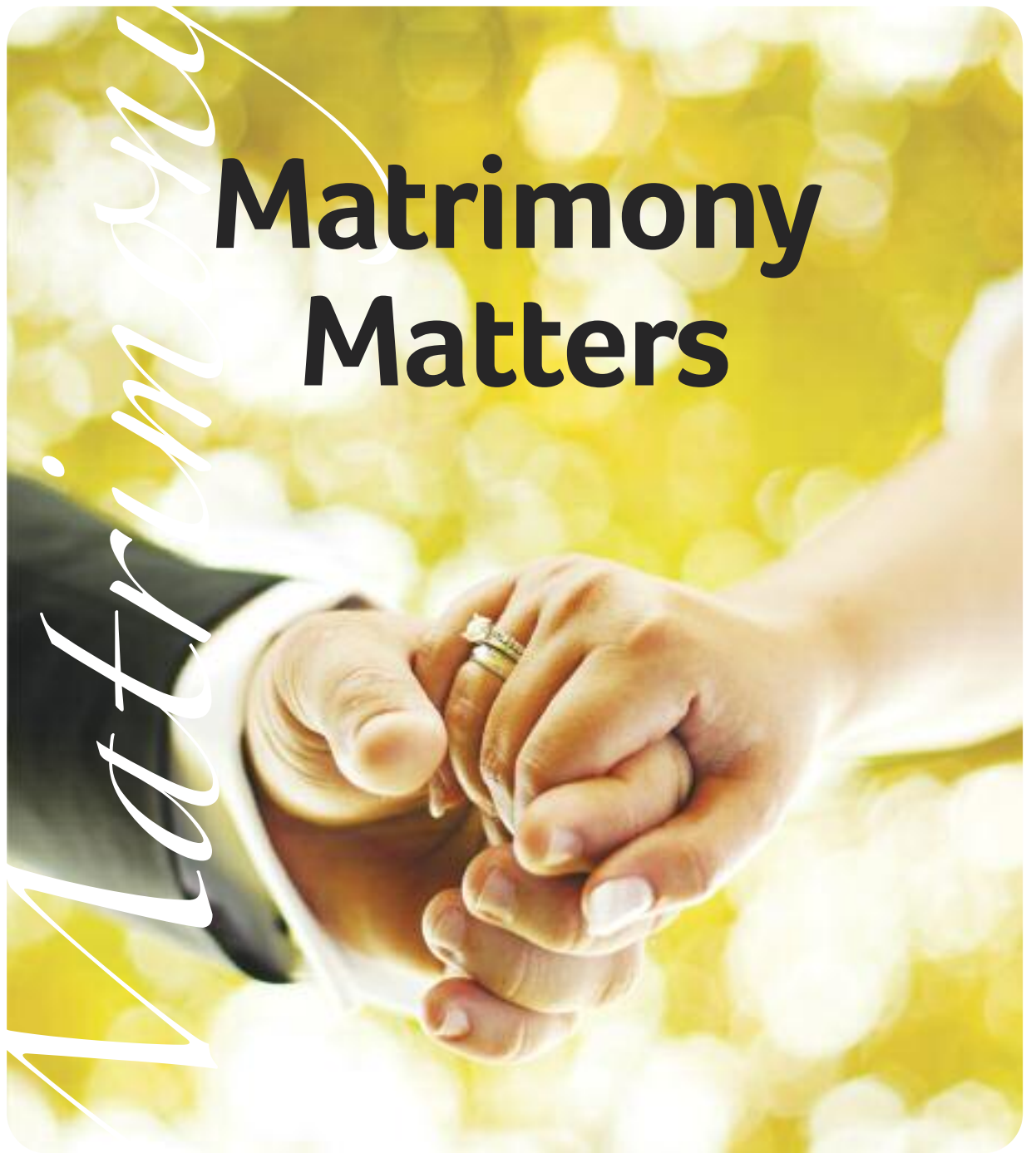
When we live in this way we also become better parents for our children. One thing our children want, perhaps more than anything in the world, is to see us, their parents, being loving towards each other.

PRAYER
Lord, help us to reach out with love to each other continuously and so transform our relationship, so that it becomes a bright beacon of your love, shining out for all your people. Amen.

www.twainoneflesh.org.uk
 Extract from 'I AM WITH YOU' – Year A & BOX-SET

What place does the family have in God's plan of creation?
 A man and women who are married to each other form, together with their children, a family. God wills that the love of the spouses, if possible, should produce children. These children, who are entrusted to the protection and care of their parents, have the same dignity as their parents. (YouCAT question 368)

"The family is a necessary good for peoples, an indispensable foundation for society and a great and lifelong treasure for couples. It is a unique good for children, who are meant to be the fruit of the love, of the total and generous self-giving of their parents"
 Pope Benedict XVI, 2006



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Living with tinnitus... The good news is you don't have to...

What is Tinnitus?
 The word 'tinnitus' comes from the Latin word for 'ringing' and is the perception of sound in the absence of any corresponding external sound. This noise may be heard in one ear, in both ears or in the middle of the head or it may be difficult to pinpoint its exact location. The noise may be low, medium or high pitched. There may be a single noise or two or more components. The noise may be continuous or it may come and go.

Tinnitus Treatments and Recent Research findings
 A study at the University of Milan has looked at the link between tinnitus and hearing loss. It was already known that most people with hearing loss have some degree of tinnitus but some sufferers of tinnitus appear to have normal hearing. Initial results from the study found that most of those with apparently normal hearing in fact appear to have at least mild hearing loss.

Hearing instruments are increasingly being used to treat tinnitus as it is thought that tinnitus results where the brain overcompensates for the loss of hearing at particular frequencies. Therefore, providing sufficient input at

these should reduce tinnitus. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a treatment administered by a therapist which seeks to change people's attitudes and behaviour. When used to treat tinnitus it seems to improve patients' quality of life, even when the volume of noise from the tinnitus remains the same.

There is currently a lot of research looking into medications to help tinnitus sufferers and drug companies are interested in finding drugs to suppress it. Further research is needed before any drug can be accepted as a standard treatment.

Tinnitus Awareness Week
 Following the Tinnitus Awareness Week back in February, PPP will be offering free advice to sufferers. We are committed to providing help and advice following Tinnitus Awareness Week. See the back page for our special events and offers to support tinnitus awareness.

What Should you do if you think you have Tinnitus?
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 - publish a response if deemed appropriate



Curry Aid, a personal initiative of Denise Oddy, has raised a further £5,000 which has gone to house, feed and clothe 140 children and a handful of elderly people.

The recipients send a very big thank you to everyone for the generous support which makes such a difference to their lives. In lots of cases the people within Indian communities have little for themselves and there are those who are completely destitute! A group of children were treated to a wonderful meal, some toys, books, pens, cakes, sweets – it was like a combining Christmas and birthdays into one big celebration. The children also received a pair of shoes, something that they had specifically asked for.

One boy would not put his shoes on until he got home as his Mother had never seen a new pair of shoes before and so he wanted to show her. A girl asked if she could have a bigger size so

she could share them with her brother, each wearing them for 6 months each. Another boy wanted to wait until he had washed his feet and a little girl couldn't feel her feet as it was like walking on sponges.

Another boy whose mother suffered with a heart complaint and therefore could not afford to keep him as he had a heart complaint as well was helped with the cost of treatment. This led to the hospital enrolling him on a sponsorship scheme which led to him having an important operation, a life saving chain of events which just would not have occurred had people here not been generous through the Curry Aid project.

Denise Oddy and husband Alan who have recently returned from India said that *"the whole experience was very moving and emotional as we have so much and take so many things for granted, whilst they have so little"*.

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Photographs courtesy of Website of the Diocese of Lancaster

Diocesan Accounts for 2013 Signed Off



On 4 February 2014 the independent auditors signed off the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 5 April 2013 for the Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

The Annual Report and Accounts for 2013 reveal that whilst overall income fell by around 6%, costs fell by around 2.5%, resulting in a net operating surplus of £35,000 compared to £343,000 in 2012. Stock market investments went up by £2.7m resulting in closing reserves of £65.9m compared to £63.2m in 2012. So overall, a 'financially' a steady year.

OFSTED reports often comment on their positive achievements in areas of social inclusion, community cohesion, mutual respect and understanding, and promoting citizenship.

A copy of the report has been sent to all parishes for display, any questions or any points in need of clarification should be addressed to your Parish Priest in the first instance.

Alternatively view the report on-line at www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=127572

Remember the Church in Your Will

If you are planning to write your Will or update one that you made earlier please do remember the Church in your bequests. Simply include the following wording if you wish to include the Diocese of Lancaster in your Will:

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The wording can of course be adapted for bequests to Parishes or the needs of the diocese identified by the Bishop eg Evangelisation.

Food for thought

An elderly gentleman...

The elderly gent had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed him to hear 100%.

The elderly gentleman went back to the doctor around a month later and the doctor said, 'Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.' The gentleman replied, 'Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times in as many weeks!'

Besides the income and expenditure figures the report tells us that Sunday attendance averaged 20,165 persons in 2012 down from 21,130 in 2011, with church collections of £2,665m (not including Gift Aid) during the financial year which equates to an average 'giving per-head' of £2.59 per week (just slightly more than the average cost of one take away cappuccino)!

Note: Gift Aid increases the value of your donations and means your parish can benefit even more at no extra cost to you. If you pay tax please speak to your Parish Priest about Gift Aid which would enable 20p being reclaimed from HMRC for every £1 you give each week.

The report acknowledges that it covers a period of economic downturn but that many of our communities are playing a 'front-line' role to provide practical help and support, often through work with inter-denominational food banks or by personal visits to those in need. Priests and lay people visit prisons and hospitals and work in universities and much of their work is 'pastoral' in nature and goes far beyond simply providing worship, important though the latter is.

There is clear evidence, the report states, that our schools – which are open to non-Catholics as well as Catholics – produce good results, both academically and socially. Although our schools are certainly denominational in nature,

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- Thursday May 1st at 7.30 pm
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Our Lady & St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge, Carlisle
- Sunday May 4th at 3.00 pm
Second Sunday after Easter
Christ the King, Horroby, Carlisle
- Friday May 9th at 7.30 pm
St Gregory Nazianzen
Sizergh Castle Chapel, nr Kendal
- Sunday May 11th at 3.00 pm
Third Sunday after Easter
St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster
- Sunday May 25th at 6.00 pm
Fifth Sunday after Easter
Our Lady & St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge, Carlisle
- Thursday May 29th at 4.00 pm
Ascension of Our Lord
Our Lady & St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge, Carlisle
- Saturday May 31st at 10.00 am
Solemn High Mass in honour of St Petronilla
Our Lady & St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge, Carlisle
(followed by devotions & procession then lunch in parish hall)

Mass is also celebrated every Sunday at 9.00 am at St Mary Magdalene, Leyland Road, Penwortham.

Local Representatives: Bob & Jane Latin
Telephone: 01524 412987
Email: lancsterlms@gmail.com
Website: latinmasslancaster.blogspot.com

‘Quo Vadis?’, ‘Where are you going?’ was the question Peter asked to Jesus as he was fleeing Nero’s persecution in Rome. In the tradition, Jesus replied, ‘I am going into the city to be crucified’, at which point Peter knew he had to follow the Lord, turn around and take up his cross. There is no other way for the Christian, and no other way for the Church.

In March, I was privileged to participate in a European Conference entitled, ‘Quo Vadis Church’. At this time when the Church is at a crossroads in the Western world, and emboldened by the faith of Pope Francis, the conference challenged us not to resign ourselves to small-mindedness, cynicism, and oblivion, but to re-open the vista of a world that sorely needs, and is indeed hungering for, the Good News.

We were privileged to hear Sherry Weddell, author of the bestselling ‘Forming Intentional Disciples’ speak. Drawing on research in America, she explained that only 48% of American Catholics are sure that they can have a personal relationship with God. Even more uncomfortable was the statistic that only 5% of Catholics attending church could be understood as ‘disciples’. What this suggests is that most Catholics have not developed a personal relationship with the Lord. Without a living encounter with the Lord, faith corrupts into a soulless religious traditionalism. And without that living encounter, the journey of discipleship barely gets off the ground.

No one underestimates the scale of the challenge before the Church in the West, but all is not lost. St Augustine reminds us that our hearts are restless until they find rest in the Lord, and our world exhibits this restlessness in so many ways. Our role is to channel this restlessness and to bring those who are searching to the fountain of living waters, to Christ Himself, to slake their thirst.

In bringing people to Christ we need to recognise where they are and be patient enough to walk with them over many months, years and even decades, always aware that a person needs to develop through different ‘thresholds of conversion’. A baby cannot be fed on Roast Beef and Yorkshire puddings: first milk, then baby food, then little by little solids, and so it is with faith.

The problem is that many of our parishes have developed good programmes of catechesis, but these are completely indigestible for those who have yet to learn how to drink the milk of faith. There is a whole stage of pre-discipleship and proclamation which is not being talked about in our parishes or in our dioceses. How do we respond to this situation?

First, Weddell argues that we have to challenge the culture of silence within our parishes, the reluctance of people to talk about a relationship with Jesus Christ. We have created an absurd situation – maybe out of a misguided fear of appearing as too Protestant – whereby in the Church people are afraid to speak about their faith. It would be the same as going to a football match where everyone was forbidden to talk about football. Weddell argues that we need to break this silence and not be ashamed to share with one

another our faith journey so that we can welcome those who have never been brought up with any faith and recognise in their searching our searching too.

Secondly, in welcoming people into the life of the Church, Weddell argues that we need to be aware of where people are coming from: this is where the concept of ‘thresholds of conversion’ is helpful. It’s all about shifting that person with the help of God from a more passive attitude towards faith through developing friendship and trust, and responding to their curiosity. Nurturing fascination with the faith can develop with time into a more active search for faith in which a person becomes an ‘intentional disciple’, consciously seeking to follow Jesus.

Helping all people – and especially those going to church – to develop through the stages of discipleship is the purpose of Weddell’s inspiring book. In light of Pope Francis’s Exhortation, ‘The Joy of the Gospel’, Weddell’s book is a book for our time.

Weddell’s book comes on the back of several other books that are challenging the way we are as a Church. Two books in particular help to translate what Weddell is saying about personal discipleship into a parish context. Robert Rivers’ ‘From Maintenance to Mission’ and Michael White and Tom Corcoran’s, ‘Rebuilt’ speak of how declining parishes in America have reversed their fortunes in surprising and radical ways.

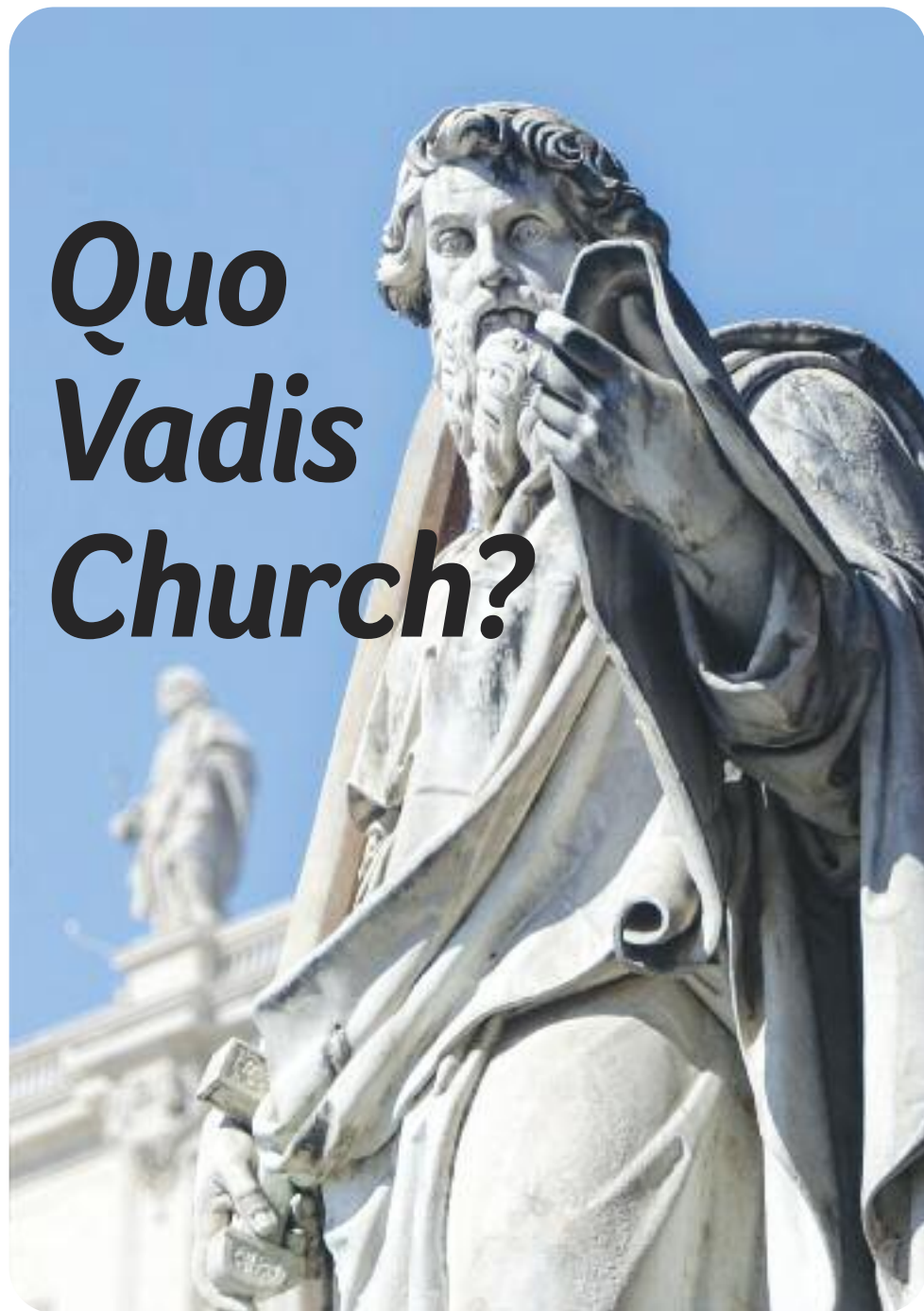
‘Rebuilt’ opens with a challenging question: If your parish closed tomorrow, who in the wider community would even notice? The realisation that in their particular parish no one would have noticed, led to an overhaul of the whole parish. The parish was challenged to turn itself inside out, keeping prayer at the centre, but reaching out to the wider community, serving the poor, evangelising.

The premise behind both these books was the observation that in recent years the Holy Spirit has inspired the creation of many new communities and movements, but the parish – as the basic cell of the Church – surely is the key to the New Evangelisation. This is a theme taken up by George Weigel in his ‘Evangelical Catholicism’ which eschews puerile Church labels (*liberal v conservative, progressive v traditionalist*) and asks the Church to step up to who she is: evangelical. **Simply put, this means we take our baptismal promises with the utmost seriousness.** Like the Samaritan woman, we’ve met a man – Jesus – who has changed our lives.

‘I am going into the city to be crucified.’

As one commentator has said, it is time to re-light the Church’s missionary fires, but good intentions need practical blueprints if they are going to work out, and these books are a good starting point, opening us up to the question for our times, Quo Vadis Domine? *Fr Philip Conner*

www.siena.org
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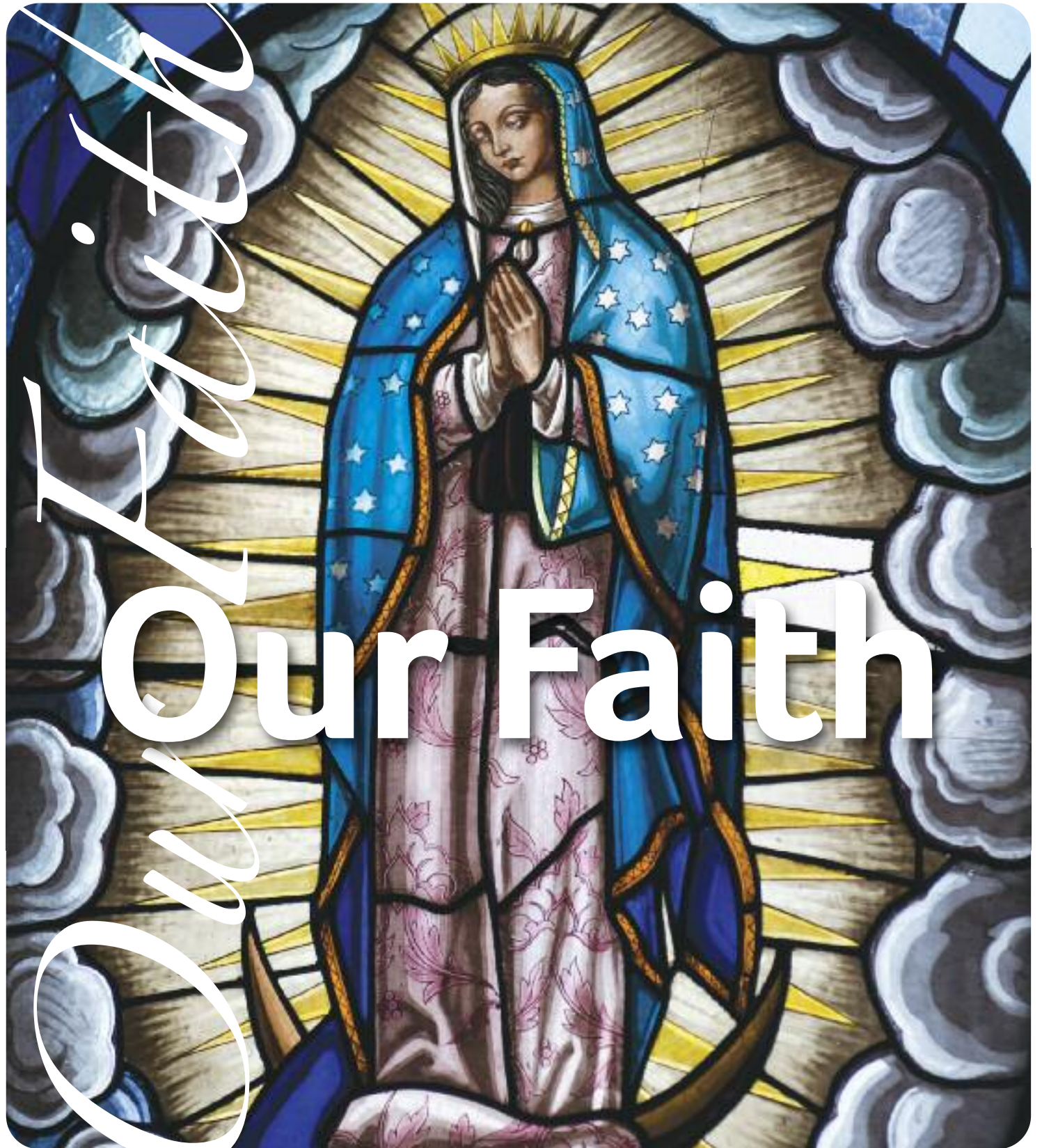
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The month of May is dedicated to Mary – *this is what our faith teaches:*

How could the Holy Spirit work within, with and through Mary?

Mary was totally responsive and open to God (Lk 1:38). Thus she was able to become the "Mother of God" through the working of the Holy Spirit and as Christ's Mother to become also the Mother of Christians, indeed, the Mother of all mankind.

Mary made it possible for the Holy Spirit to work the miracle of all miracles: the Incarnation of God. She gave God her Yes: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, she went with Jesus through thick and thin, even to the foot of the Cross. There Jesus gave her to us all as our Mother (Jn 19:25-27).
(YOUCAT questions 116-117)

Can Mary really help us?

Yes. Since the beginning of the Church, experience has taught that Mary helps. Millions of Christians testify to it.

Being the Mother of Jesus, Mary is also our Mother. Good mothers always stand up for their children. Certainly this Mother does. While still on earth she interceded with Jesus for others; for example, she protected a bride and groom in Cana from embarrassment. In the Upper Room on Pentecost she prayed in the midst of the disciples. Because her love for us never ceases, we can be sure that she will plead for us in the two most important moments of our life: "now and at the hour of our death".
(YOUCAT 147)

May we worship Mary?

No. Only God can be worshipped. But we can revere Mary as the Mother of our Lord.

By worship we mean the humble, unconditional acknowledgment of the absolute superiority of God over all creatures. Mary is a creature like us. In faith she is our Mother. And we should honour our parents.

There is a biblical basis for this, since Mary herself says, "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48b). So the Church has Marian shrines and places of pilgrimage, feast days, hymns, and prayers, for instance, the Rosary. It is a compendium of the Gospels.
(YOUCAT 148)

What can we learn from the way in which Mary prayed?

To learn from Mary how to pray means to join her in prayer: "Let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Prayer is ultimately self-giving in response to God's love. If we say "Yes" as Mary did, God has the opportunity to lead his life in our life. *(YOUCAT 479)*

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.

Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Amen.



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St Teresa of Avila

This year, the Church and the worldwide Carmelite Family are preparing to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the birth in 1515 of Teresa of Avila. She was to become not only a saint but also a Doctor of the Church, Co-Patroness of Spain and Foundress of the Discalced Carmelite Order.

A Day of Reflection

On Saturday, 22 March 2014, the Carmelite nuns in Preston, the Carmelite Friars at Tabor, and the Secular Order of Carmel in Preston opened their own Quincentenary celebrations with a day dedicated to the life, work and teachings of St Teresa, reflecting on what we can learn from her and how she still speaks to us today. The following article is a brief account of the occasion for the Carmelite Family and the many friends of Carmel throughout the diocese.

The day began with Mass at 9.00am at the Carmelite monastery. It was con-celebrated by our three Carmelite Friars and had as its theme, "I Was Born For You". Fr. Matt Blake gave the homily and blessed the thousand Centenary Icons that will be on display in the Carmelite Chapel. The 'Tabor Singing Group' formed the choir. After Mass, the day of reflection continued at Tabor from 10.30.am – 4.00.pm, with talks by Gillian Coxhead and Fr. Matt Blake, Order of Carmelites Discalced, on the theme, 'Holy Madness – Who is Teresa of Avila?' In the afternoon, Sr. Mary Elisabeth presented a powerpoint on Teresa and afterwards everyone was invited to take a scroll with a quote from St. Teresa on it.

So, who is Teresa of Avila?

Teresa was born into a pious family in Avila and, as a young girl, was inspired by the influence and example of an Augustinian nun at her convent boarding school to seek a deeper relationship with God. Teresa had no desire to get married, but neither did she want to become a nun. However, there were few life choices at

that time in 16th Century Spain. She had a friend in the Carmelite Convent in Avila and so, at the age of 21, she decided to enter there.

For many years, she was lukewarm, abandoning prayer and seeking solace in friendships. At the age of 42, she underwent a great conversion after seeing an image of the wounded Christ. She knelt down and begged Christ, saying she would not get up until He had granted her what she asked. Teresa then embarked on a mystical relationship with Christ which was to make her one of the most renowned teachers of prayer. She said: "Prayer is simply conversation with Him who we know loves us." She taught that a deep friendship with Christ was paramount for spiritual growth. Prayer for Teresa was not thinking much, but loving much. And she maintained that it is not what we do for God that matters, but what He does for us.

Teresa's life was one of radical ongoing conversion experiences – the deeper she experienced Christ, the more she went out to others. This led to an inspiration to found convents throughout Spain that would allow her sisters sacred space and time to give themselves totally to Christ.

And how does she still speak to us?

Teresa lived in a time like our own, of great insecurity and uncertainty. She had a burning missionary zeal and felt keenly the sufferings of Christ and His Church. "The world is in flames; they want to sentence Christ again; they raise a thousand false witnesses against Him; they want to ravage His Church." Since Christ had so few friends, she endeavoured to gather faithful followers around her, who would offer their lives, their prayers and their tears for the sake of His Body, the Church.

Teresa teaches us the inestimable value of the human soul. All of us have a God-shaped hole within us that only He can fill, but she tells us not to imagine we are hollow inside. She explains that if we could see the beauty of the soul, it is a

castle wherein God takes His delight. If we truly realised our value and worth, we would be overwhelmed with joy and hope.

God was Teresa's whole life: she did not confine him to one hour on a Sunday. She tells us to live always in His presence and she teaches us about the importance of the sacrament of the present moment, where Christ even "walks among the pots and pans".

Future opportunities

Our day of reflection came to an end; first with a tea-party and a solemn cake-cutting of two Quincentenary celebration cakes with images of Teresa printed on them, and then with a prayer session led by Gillian to the accompaniment of Spanish music. Each person was given a walnut to hold that came from a tree in Avila that Teresa herself planted – a reminder to us that we are the fruit of her vine.

This day of celebration is just a beginning. Throughout the year, there will be ongoing celebrations and opportunities to learn more about Teresa at Tabor Retreat Centre in Preston and at other national events.

To learn more about Teresa see: www.teresaofavila.org

We are blest to have in our Diocese of Lancaster branches of the Carmelite Family: Carmelite Friars at Tabor Retreat Centre in Preston: www.carmelite.net
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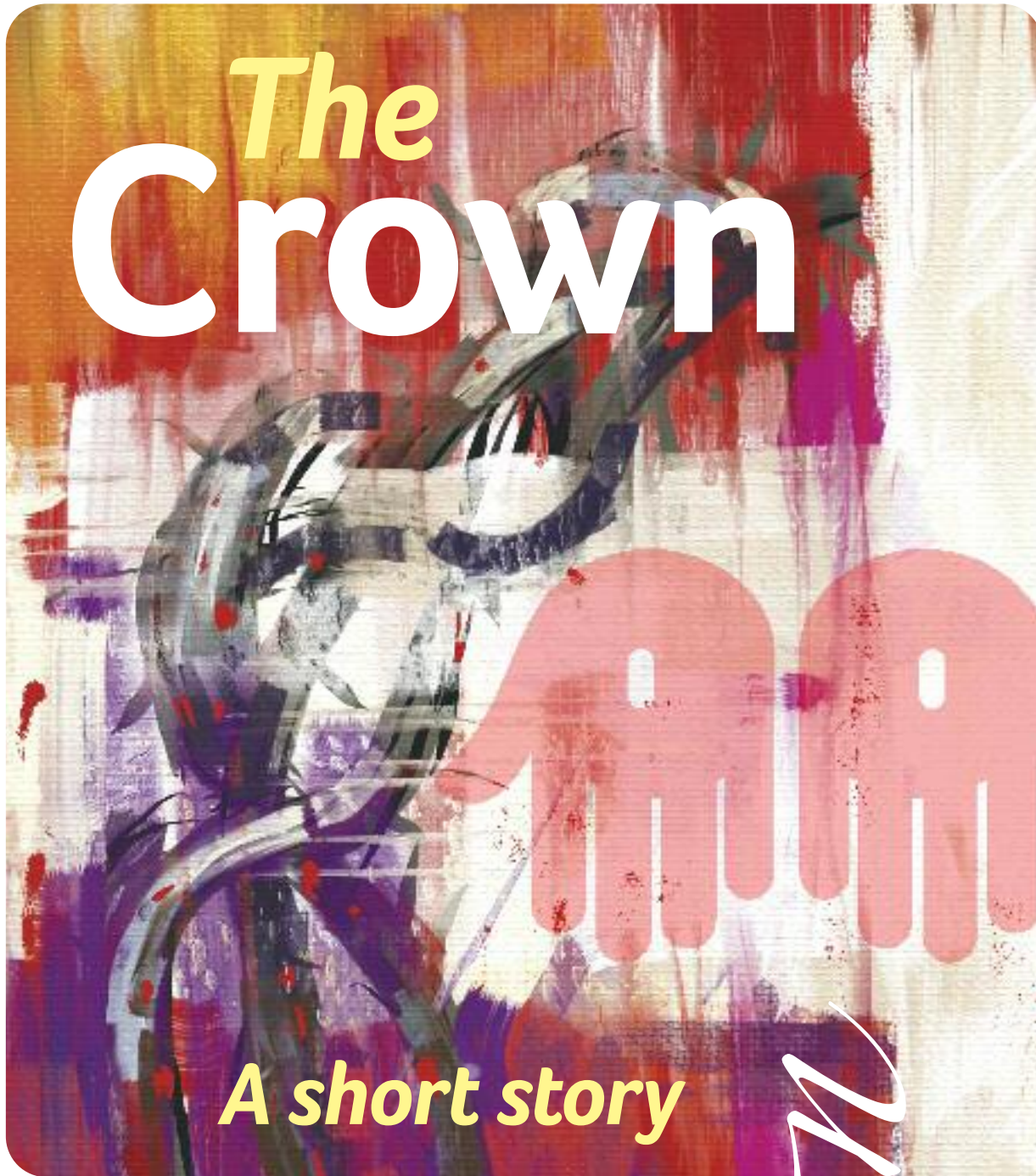
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It was the 26th year of my life when it all changed. I was a soldier in the Imperial Roman army. I was the strongest, fittest, and biggest of all the unit of men sent to keep order among the Jews. We were the occupying army and sedition was a major problem. I had my own way of dealing with trouble makers. One blow from me and they never forgot it. Broken ribs, broken necks, broken backs were my trademark.

I will never forget the day of the triple crucifixions. We started early and nailed up two thieves and thought it was the end of our days work. It was some kind of Jewish Passover and to keep the peace we were ordered to stay away from their places of worship.

Thinking our day's duty was over the Centurion in charge of our Cohort ordered us to stand down. Time was our own and skins of wine were bought and gambling games set up. There's one thing about the Roman soldier, he can drink, fight and gamble better than any army anywhere.

I was on my third skin of wine and my second wrestling bout when the Centurion called us to attention. There was trouble in the square and a well organised mob was baying for blood! Well trained soldiers jump to attention, pull on their Imperial army tunics and prepare for battle. We staggered to our feet, stumbled into our tunics and cursed all the gods we knew. Sword into scabbard at the third attempt, a stagger to the left to retrieve my spear and then lining up outside to march off. We were all raging mad at losing our time off and I was prepared to take it out on any Jew in sight.

The sight we saw wasn't what we were expecting. There was a man standing at the top of the steps to the square and his hands were bound. I recognised him at once as the preacher who drew large crowds. Our unit had been sent out once or twice to make sure the crowd was peaceful when he preached and I liked the things he said but today he was the cause of lost leisure.

The centurion informed us that this man had been sentenced to a flogging and I immediately volunteered. Drusus who had lost all his money at the gambling games was as peeved as I and picked up a whip and stood ready with me.

I held his face up to see what I'd done and his eyes looked into mine. My heart lurched and suddenly I was sorry for this gentle man whom I had so badly abused above and beyond the call of duty.

A skin of wine was produced as army issue and as they removed the outer garments of the prisoner his 'crimes' were read out to the mob. His name was Jesus from the hill country of Nazareth. Sedition was one of the charges but some came forward to say he consorted with Satan to cure the incurable, to bring the dead back to life and was about to destroy the temple. They said he proclaimed himself King of the Jews!

He was tied to the post and I took a run and lashed his back. If you do it close up, the ends curl round to the chest. Drusus went for the thighs. I spat wine on the wounds to stop the five prongs of the lash from sticking. The crowd booed and lashed again, spinning the whip around my head so that his blood sprayed them. We gave him a dozen more thinking that we were finished, when the Centurion informed us that this was a crucifixion. The rabble had been baying "crucify him" but I thought he was just here for a flogging.

A cross arrived and I yelled at him "I'll give you king of the Jews" From the prickly bush at the corner of the square I cut several lengths and wove them into a crown. My fingers bled but I was too mad to care. I pushed it hard down onto his head. It slipped but I hammered it down with the edge of my sword. It pierced his brow and the tops of his ears. I held his face up to see what I'd done and his eyes looked into mine. My heart lurched and suddenly I was sorry for this gentle man whom I had so badly abused above and beyond the call of duty.

We started off along the rubble strewn path to mount Calvary and I knew it would take a long time because of the extreme flogging he had just endured. He fell and I lifted up the crossbeam of the cross and realized how heavy it was. We all tried to hurry him along, but he was getting nearer to the

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ground. His bare feet were bleeding and bits of stone were sticking in his knees, made worse when he fell. The cross was gauging a deep trail in the sandy uneven path and we were struggling to keep him moving. He fell again, the cross landing on his back knocking the wind out of him and pushing the crown of thorns deeper into the back of his head. I grabbed a man from the crowd of followers, some crying, and some jeering. He protested that he was a traveler on his way to the city but I slapped the back of his head and yelled 'lift'. No one ignores a slap when I give it and the well dressed man took a firm hold of the blood wet cross and lifted it.

Jesus held one end of the crossbeam and the traveler the other with his arm trying to support half of the cross and the other arm trying to hold up Jesus by his clothing which by now was sticking to his flesh. The cross continued to plough a furrow into the path. The hill was in sight but Jesus fell a third time pulling the traveler to his knees.

Again I felt sorry for this silent man who accepted this cruel Roman punishment without saying one word. I knew his mother was in the crowd by the way that

she looked at him and how she cried out each time he fell.

At last we were here and the hole was already dug for the cross. The crew was there to nail him and pull the cross upright with ropes front and back. Some fool had made a sign saying King of the Jews' I felt disgust at this along with the crown I had made. The only time I heard Jesus cry out in pain was when the cross was pulled upright and he swayed as it rocked into position.

We decided to kill a bit of time by gambling for his clothes. I won his cloak and someone tried to buy it but for some reason I felt compelled to keep it.

Time dragged. The other two prisoners were chiding Jesus about being the son of God "Get yourself out of this". One said to leave him alone that he was a good man who did only good in this world and didn't deserve this punishment. At that moment I realized how ashamed I felt about the way I had treated this gentle brave man. Now he was telling the thief that he would be rewarded for his belief in him by meeting him in paradise!

Oh Jesus, how I want to tell you how sorry I am for what I have done to you. My pride in front of my fellow soldiers will not let me.

Time dragged on and at last Jesus called to his father in heaven asking if it could be all over. Some time later he breathed a long sigh and the silence was broken only by the cry from his mother.

The centurion took my spear and pierced the bottom of his lung. This was done because people hanging in that position eventually gave up trying to lift themselves upright to breathe and the lungs filled with water. Jesus' lungs poured out water and the Centurion was satisfied that he was dead.

The cross was lowered and before the nails were removed I took the crown of thorns from his head and whispered my request for his forgiveness. Wrapping the crown in his cloak I held it to my breast and a peace I had never known in my life came over me.

Back at the barracks I thought about my life. I thought about the Roman Empire occupying this country and demanding

taxes from every one to pay for soldiers like me to plunder and occupy other peace loving countries.

I decided to leave the Imperial Roman Army and seek out the followers of Jesus and learn about his teaching. I was not a conscript so I had the option of leaving by request. With my request in writing it was a matter of waiting for confirmation of my release. While on guard duty I cut down the prickle bush with my military sword and dug up the root with my military spear. Then I took the crown of thorns from it's hiding place and buried it in the place of the prickle bush.

My release came through a few days later and as I crossed the square for the last time I saw that a beautiful rose bush in full bloom had sprung up where I had buried the crown of thorns. I found the followers of Jesus who had regrouped and were multiplying rapidly. I told them my story and they accepted me.

I have spent many happy years traveling many lands preaching and teaching. Not how to fight but how to love one another and to forgive your enemies as Jesus forgave me a sadist and a torturer.

Margaret Poland

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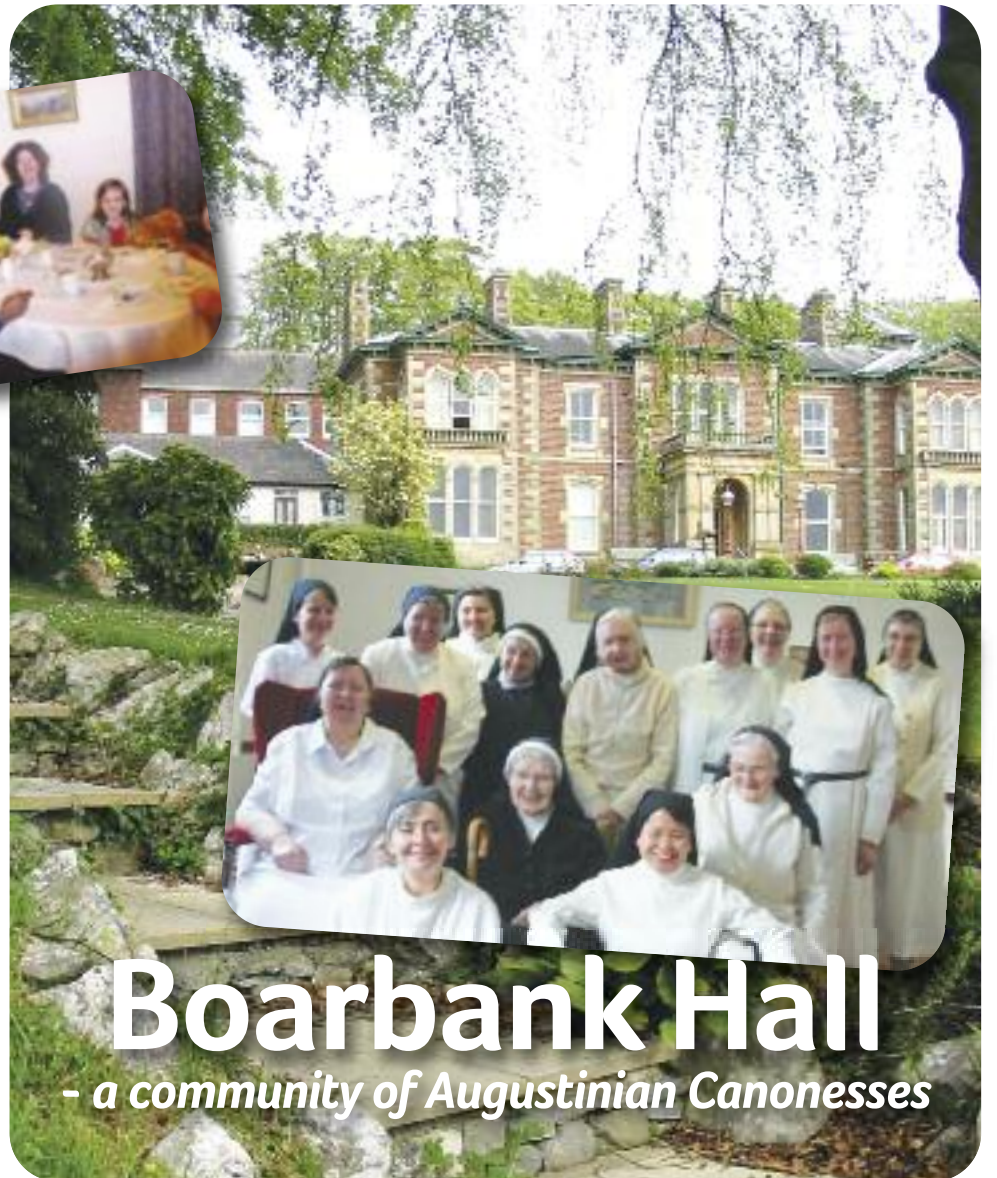
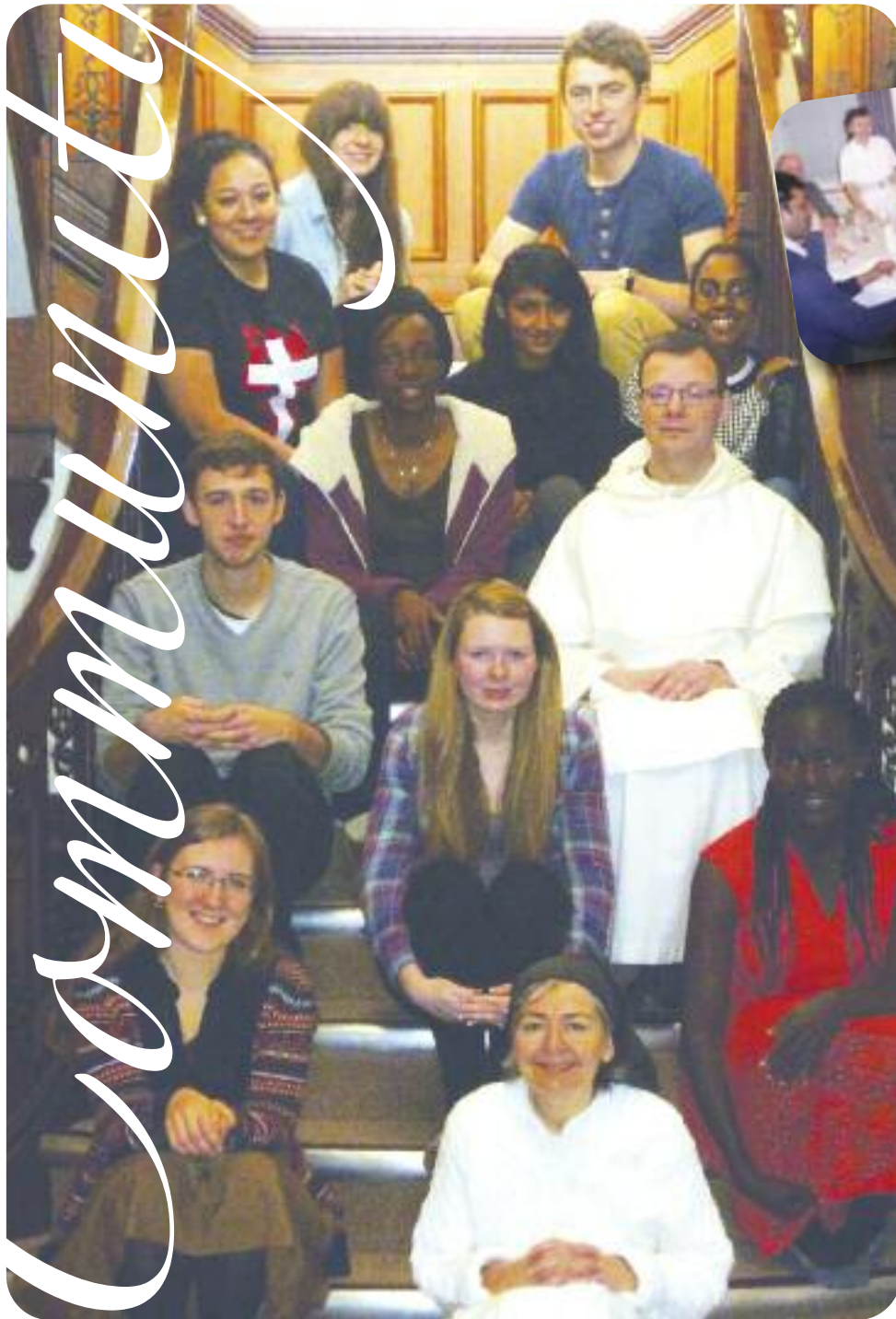
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Boarbank Hall

- a community of Augustinian Canonesses

We are a community of twelve Augustinian Sisters, with two Benedictine Sisters who share our life. Our full title is 'Augustinian Canonesses Hospitallers of the Mercy of Jesus'. It sounds long-winded, but each element tells a story. Augustinian: our Rule goes back to St Augustine of Hippo. It is short and simple, focusing not on the detail of life, but on the spirit: everything we do is for the sake of unity and love in our shared search for God.

Canonesses: canon is the Greek for 'rule', and we identify ourselves as people who follow a rule of life together, living as one community. We share our possessions, we share a prioress and a structure of organisation, we eat together, we care for one another. But most of all, our 'rule' is expressed in our common prayer, as we sing or say together daily Mass, and the Prayer of the Church. It is from this that the work of our mission flows. To quote our Constitutions: 'The depth of our words and of our gift of self to others will depend on the depth of our silence.'

Hospitallers: this is an old-fashioned word, but it is related to many modern words: hospitality, host, hospital, hospice, hotel, hostelry. These words show how we now separate what was a single idea in the medieval world: offering a home to those in need, whether they were sick, hungry and thirsty or visiting travellers. At Boarbank, we bring these words together again, welcoming the sick to our Nursing Home, retreatants, travellers and holiday makers to our guest house, and the hungry and thirsty to our refectory, those who are hungry for truth and meaning to our courses and study days, bringing them all together as our extended family. Our Constitutions put it this way: 'We exercise hospitality first of all in our own hearts. These are transformed by the Holy Spirit

into places where someone who is a stranger becomes a brother or sister.'

Of the mercy of Jesus: we take a fourth vow to 'serve the poor and the sick through works of mercy'. This shapes the way that we welcome and care for our patients, guests and visitors, always seeking to mediate the gentleness of Christ towards others. Our many lay employees and our volunteers share our ideals and support us in putting them into practice.

Each Sister has a different story of how she found her vocation. Here is one of them:

"My living in the Community at Boarbank is the result of God's continuous call, His gentle yet persistent love, His intimate knowledge and understanding of me and His unfailing mercy and forgiveness and of my variable response experienced as a search, a longing for something more- not more and more of the same or things totally other but of a building on or deepening of things already familiar; of the need to give of all that I have been given."

As a cradle Catholic and after a few years of intermittent practise in my early twenties I experienced a call back due to the witness of a group of friends. With them I rediscovered my faith, a deeper love of God and an ever increasing need for prayer.

Added to this were my liking for order and routine; a career as a Registered Nurse; a need to feel rooted and that I belonged; an enjoyment of music and singing and here I am having recently celebrated my Silver Jubilee with the hope of many more years of love and service to come."

For more information visit our website at www.boarbankhall.org.uk or contact Sr Margaret Atkins via email at margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk



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In September 2014 the school started the process of embedding a new 'valued added' curriculum to challenge two national statistics, Firstly 85% of visually impaired pupils will struggle to find work and, secondly they may have 5-6 less friends. The school aims to generate an 'education and enterprise' village targeting key areas where there are employment opportunities for our young people.

Supported by partners which include Liverpool Hope University, Merseyside Police, Merseycare and Sainsbury's we are undertaking projects through which our pupils can highlight their employable strengths, as we simultaneously engage with socialising events. A good example of our value added curriculum is our bid to 'go green' in a solar panel project. Our pupils will manage this project securing valuable skills and experiences. If you would like to help our pupils gain employment skills and challenge the 85% unemployment and less friends' statistics, please consider following our projects at www.stvin.com or indeed supporting our solar bid www.solarschools.org.uk/stvincents For more information contact office@stvin.com


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Fairtrade Fortnight 24 Feb – 7 Mar 2014 (Above)

During the fortnight every class was involved in raising awareness about Fairtrade such as designing posters and even selling cereal bars at break time.

The children in Willow class (Year 5) took part in a Go Bananas workshop and sent a petition to the Houses of Parliament to support the Fairtrade campaign to get a fairer deal for Third World workers like Foncho.



Classroom Blessing (Left)

Fr Peter Foulkes blesses our new classroom, Sycamore, built during the Autumn term for Year 6 children.

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