

The Catholic VOICE *of Lancaster*

The Official Newspaper to
the Diocese of Lancaster
Issue 265 + December 2014

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Gloria in excelsis Deo!

A Very Happy Christmas to all our readers

Let us pray that this Christmas all peoples will feel close to God and grow in love for Him.

When we visit the child Jesus in the crib this Christmas let us remember all those people who are being persecuted for their faith, those who are sick, marginalised or homeless, those suffering any form of abuse and those who are lonely. May the God of Peace bring them comfort and give us the courage to help where we can, both spiritually and materially.

All over our diocese outreach initiatives are supporting people locally and overseas demonstrating 'Our Faith' in action. Some parishes, schools and organisations whilst supporting national charities such as CAFOD also have individual projects that they support at home and overseas. In this edition you will read about a small group raising money for an initiative in Ghana and the work of the SVP who support the needy both locally and abroad. These are just two examples from countless others from the length and breadth of the Diocese that the 'Catholic Voice' has reported on this year.

"Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me" – Matthew 25:40

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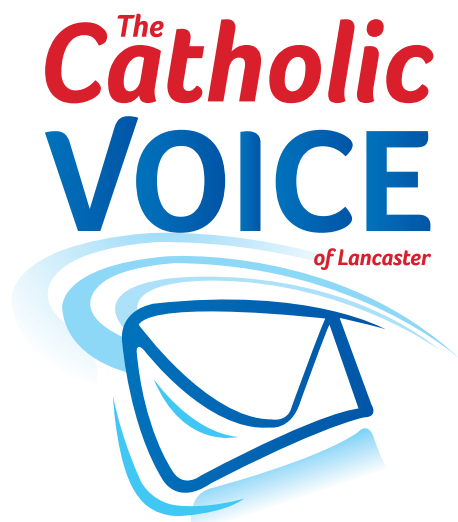
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May the Child Jesus encourage us to face the New
Year with renewed vigour to help all those in need.



Contact us

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EDITORIAL

Nothing destroys relationships like resentment. The road to freeing ourselves from anger is forgiveness. Yet to forgive someone who has hurt us may be one of the hardest things we ever do.

Myths about Forgiveness

Fr. Jean Monbourquette, Canadian priest and psychologist, debunks the myths associated with forgiveness in his classic work, *'How to forgive'*: Forgiveness does not mean condoning the offence, forgetting the hurt or necessarily reconciling with the other person. The other party may not wish to be reconciled, or the relationship might be a harmful one, which it would be unwise to renew.

Why Forgive?

Harbouring anger towards those who have hurt us keeps us in their power. Resentment blocks grace, impeding our personal and spiritual growth. Anger can lead to a desire to hurt back: through words, ignoring, destroying reputation, or force. We may take our anger out on those who remind us of the original offender, causing problems in professional or romantic life. St Paul counsels, *'Do not let the sun go down on your anger'* (Eph. 4:26). The wise among us have a sense of perspective, and have learned to let go.

Forgiveness breaks the cycle of revenge-taking. We cannot expect wars to cease until we learn to practise love within our families, churches and workplaces. When we love others, we receive God's mercy: Of the woman who anointed His feet, Jesus said *"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much"*.

Steps towards forgiveness

1. Fr. Monbourquette advises **acknowledging all the feelings** associated with the original experience. Anger is a secondary emotion, often arising from anxiety, disappointment, hurt, or shame.

2. I may need to **consider how I have hurt the other**, though this is not always the case. Maybe I need forgiveness too.
3. Next I **recognise how much I have been forgiven by God**. Saint Teresa of Avila realised painfully how much her sins had offended God. We each need to come to this personal insight, without which the Cross has no meaning. St Ignatius encouraged retreatants undertaking his Spiritual Exercises to pray for the grace to see their sin and its effects on others. Dare we make this growth-giving prayer? Contemplate Jesus on the Cross. He is there because of my sins. To nurse my grudge, is to emulate the ungrateful servant who, having been released and forgiven his debt by his Lord, then seized his fellow servant by the throat, saying, *'Pay what you owe'* (Mt. 18:23-35).
4. Jesus teaches us from the Cross: *'Forgive them Father. They don't know what they are doing'*. Those who hurt us do not fully understand the impact they are having. We recall that usually, others have hurt them.
5. We don't have to wait until we feel loving – forgiveness is an act of the will. We need to **pray for the grace to forgive**: this is not something we can do on our own.
6. We will then need to **discern whether to be reconciled**, and if so whether to acknowledge the difficulties or draw a line under them. Forgiveness may be shown simply by interacting with kindness.

Forgiveness is both a decision and a process. It takes time. Joyce Meyer, an American evangelist, forgave her father who had sexually abused her, and before he died he became a Christian. Leonard Wilson, Anglican Bishop of Singapore, and prisoner-of-war, baptised the Japanese prison officer who had tortured him.

We have the daunting power to set our neighbour free from the crippling burden of guilt. Lord, give us the grace to use it.

***'Do not let
the sun go
down on
your anger'***
(Eph. 4:26)

Matrimony Matters

Amen.

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



The Craft Club of English Martyr's Preston was set up in 2013 to help produce items for sale to help with parish heating and lighting costs. Earlier this year the small group said farewell to Rose Abakah-Otoo who was returning to the Cape Coast, Ghana to be re-united with other members of her family. So far the Club has raised £1,000 – an excellent achievement.



St Peter's Lytham CWL celebrated their 40th anniversary in September with their last surviving founder member Mrs Mattie Simpson invited to cut the celebration cake. Mass was concelebrated by Fr David Burns and Fr Peter Sharp with Deacon Michael Harrison, who is spiritual advisor to the Section, assisting. Lytham members were joined by members of the CWL from far and wide for the celebrations.



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Being a Young Catholic Today

Aiofe, 18,
Preston



One Amazing Life in Christ

I won't be the first person to say that being a young Catholic today can be really hard, you can find yourself living two separate lives.

You have a home life where you can go to Mass and talk about your faith, and there is another life at school or college where society can be so different from what you believe that you don't really want to stand out.

In your "other" life you can feel like you're completely on your own but you don't have to be. The best part of being a young Catholic is that you're not alone; there are so many other people your age who share the same excitement for their faith as you do. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to go to Youth 2000 in Walsingham this year, where, for the first time I realised that my faith is the most exciting adventure I can imagine and there are so many people around me who I can share it with.

Most people who know me know that I wouldn't be the first person to introduce myself in a group or to share my thoughts with other people but when you are surrounded by people who are overflowing with energy and love for God it's impossible not to join in.

Basically what I'm trying to say is don't be a young Catholic by yourself because it is too easy for your faith to be smothered by the things that are going on around you. Find a friend to go to Mass with at college or someone you can talk to on the bus about your struggles. Get involved as much as you can because then instead of having two separate lives you can have one amazing life in Christ.

COMING UP -FLAME 2



Fanning the Spirit into a Flame

Back in 2012 eight thousand young people from across England gathered together for the first ever Flame Congress at Wembley Arena in London. The idea was to build upon the wonderful success of the Pope Benedict's Vigil with young people at Hyde Park in 2010.

The day was a mixture of inspirational speakers, multimedia presentations, live music, personal witness, vibrant performances, and prayer. Our diocese was represented by groups from Cardinal Allen High School, Fleetwood, Our Lady's High School, Preston and Our Lady and St Benedict's Deanery in West Cumbria. At least one young person chose to be baptised at the event and was received into the Church as a result of the experience.

Josephine, 15, Fleetwood, "I was a little nervous about the long journey to Wembley, but really enjoyed everything about the event; the speeches, the drama, the music and the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. I was sad to leave but I feel like my heart is open to God now. I will never forget this wonderful experience."

Daniel, 15, Whitehaven, "We followed the huge amount of young people running with excitement to the arena. As soon as we walked in we were amazed! The music was amazing, the atmosphere was amazing – everything was amazing! Everyone was making new friends and speaking to people who they would never think of speaking to. As we went in, I just stood there! The size of the arena and the stage was awesome. The arena quickly filled up with young people and the event started. This was the place to be if you were a young Catholic!"

Over the weekend of 6-8 March 2015, the Youth Service is taking a coach down to Flame 2. Staying in a hotel, time for sightseeing and Mass in Westminster Cathedral we will have the privilege of hearing great speakers such as Cardinal Vincent Nichols, and Cardinal Tagle from the Philippines, and Baroness Hollins with music led by Matt Redmond, an internationally acclaimed praise and worship leader.

Are you thinking "I'd like to go to something like that"? Register a place by contacting the Youth Service as soon as possible, www.castleriggmanor.co.uk or phone 017687 72711.



The Manor Makeover, Castlerigg, that is, continues with resident Bosco supervising proceedings.

The accommodation improvements will support the Diocesan Youth Service continue to work with young people throughout the North West of England. The Youth Service aims to encourage all young people to grow in faith and confidence, helping to set them on a firm foundation for the future. As with any improvements, there is a COST and the Youth Service would greatly appreciate any financial help to support their initiative. Cheques should be made payable to the "Diocesan Youth Service" and sent to Ms Ruth Corless, Director of the Diocesan Youth Service, Castlerigg Manor, Manor Brow, Keswick CA12 4AR.

An open night of prayer and reflection at Sacred Heart, Blackpool entitled 'Night Fever' was held at the end of October. This new outreach initiative has already been hugely successful and popular across Manchester, London and in cities all over the world.

The aim of 'Night Fever' is to invite people into a town centre church to experience a moment of candlelit prayer, reflection and spiritual hospitality. Everyone is welcome, people just passing by, people who have never been into a church or those who haven't been for a long time or people within the community or parish that feel they would like to support the mission and join in.

Sacred Heart church doors were opened from 7.30pm until 10pm and over that time about eighty people were welcomed into the church.

Blackpool has a very thriving and busy evening entertainment scene with theatres, pubs, restaurants and tourist attractions. In the centre of town and midst all the hustle and bustle is the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. So, it was quite fitting that the church should open

their doors and invite people to pop in for a moment of quiet, reflection and prayer – maybe even light a candle, as they plan a night on the town!

God is everywhere, at all times and for all people. For many who took advantage of the initiative, it was their first time in a Catholic Church and there was a warm welcome awaiting them; people were invited to just come in, maybe light a candle, say a prayer, talk to a priest, or reflect and listen to some music. The theme of the evening was "Welcome, come and go as you please. The church is open for you."

A street mission team of volunteers went out in pairs, made up of local parishioners from other Catholic churches in the area and youth workers from Castlerigg. They worked together and carried special lanterns to light the way as they invited passers-by to pop in for moment and experience some quiet reflection inside the church. They provided information sheets, prayer cards and other activities to make people feel at ease and understand about how to pray. It was an open night of prayer where people could experience the beautiful atmosphere of the church at night, with the candlelit ambiance and enjoy a moment of peace.

Simon Stewart, Chaplaincy Team Leader at St Mary's Catholic Academy and Secretary of the Deanery Pastoral Council said "Sr. Anne Stewart, a Holy Child Sister had come across 'Night Fever' and suggested it to the deanery. The chaplaincy team at St Marys and Castlerigg enthusiastically followed her lead and the project gathered pace, ably assisted by Fr Peter Sharrock and Canon Robert Dewhurst." He continued, "In the deanery we have been exploring ways of reaching out to those who are disconnected from the Church – responding to the Holy Father's challenge to look outside of ourselves. 'Night Fever' seemed a fresh and positive form of outreach, utilising our gifts to welcome people in. The Sacred Heart church was particularly well-placed at the heart of Blackpool and we thought we would hold our event during the 'Illuminations season' when the town is at its busiest.

We hope it will become a regular event and provide a place of quiet and spiritual comfort in the midst of noise and distraction. At the very least it will bring people in the deanery together to pray, worship and find some much-needed space in our busy world."

Lighting Up Blackpool



Prayer to The Holy Mother of The Son Of God

Thank you for Mercy Holy Mother of the son of God I pray to you for your help in my hour of need . Holy Mother please help me deliver my request to the Lord Jesus Christ (make request) and send the Holy Spirit to help me make this wish or miracle become a reality. Forgive me my sins and allow me to walk proudly as God's servant. I accept Jesus Christ as my savour and teacher to guide me towards the path of the righteous way of life. Thank-you and praise the Lord God. **Amen**



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The builders take a few minutes out of their busy schedule to pose for a group photograph in the grounds of Castlerigg.

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Dear Editor,
In the November issue of the **Catholic Voice**, the article entitled "Secular Carmelites" it would actually have been more appropriately called "Secular consecrated life in the Carmelite Family". Indeed, members of the Secular Institute of Notre-Dame de Vie are not consecrated religious, nor tertiaries, as the word "Carmelites" or the phrase "Secular Carmelites" may imply, but rather consecrated lay people and priests, bound by the three vows, and living their consecration in the midst of the secular world. This is part of the Church's incredible diversity and richness, for which we give thanks!

Anne-Julie via e mail

Dear Editor,
Recently my brother and his wife came to visit me whilst I was hospitalised and left me a copy of the September edition of the **Catholic Voice** because I knew some of the people mentioned in it.

My wife and I have fond memories of Fr John Hawkins who passed away recently, he married us 41 years ago this coming January. If we had known of his funeral we would have tried to attend, although it is approximately 40 years ago since I went to church. Within the homily given at his funeral Mass there is reference to Fr. Lea. He was a much respected priest who was addressed Fr Lea or Fr Francis but never as the writer cites Fr. Frank Lea.

There is a time for remembrance and also for reconciliation because I had not spoken to my brother and his wife for quite a number of years. I was pleased to see them and make up for lost time although the circumstances were not the best. Another article in the Paper was concerning Mgr. Canon Frank Slattery's diamond jubilee, I remember him from my young days at Thistleton Lodge and then Underley Hall – please pass on my congratulations and best wishes to him for the future.

Can I also please use your Paper to wish all those readers who knew me in those far off days all the best for the future, some names come readily to mind even after so long.

Yours sincerely John Kane, Alsager, Cheshire

Dear Editor,
I appreciated your editorial in the October issue of **The Catholic Voice** on the promotion of peace in our troubled times. We tend to forget, or not appreciate, that we should be "People of the Beatitudes". There are too few peacemakers in the world because too few understand the Beatitudes and live by them. Until we have cleansed ourselves of all external materialism, become meek, mourned for our sins, those of the church and of the world, sought to apply God's justice and mercy, and cleansed ourselves of internal impurities, we have too many attachments and hang-ups to have sufficient peace within ourselves to be able to help others. Those who struggle to live the Beatitudes gain glimpses of God's will and through this become true peacemakers, having no personal agenda or blocking weaknesses. Only those at one with God through sacrifices, prayer, the Sacraments and Adoration are able to truly have God's peace and impart it to others. However, we are all obliged to try to live the Beatitudes as best we can and strive to gain that peace in order to pass it on to others.

A series explaining the Beatitudes has been evolving over the last few months on the following blog: **latinmasslancaster.blogspot.com**

Bob Latin, Morecambe

Christmas Prayer

Dear Lord
On this lovely, holy Eve,
Be with me, I pray
And guide me to understand your coming,
And why it is we celebrate, especially now.

Help me to look beyond the presents
and their flowing ribbons;
Open my heart and my eyes, and help
me to see and feel the suffering that
shakes our earth.

Many hunger, and are cold and lonely
in this world of plenty;
And many stray from your light,
by evil and its ways;
And the hustle and bustle;
How I fear it's replaced the real joy
we should feel.

That starry night so long ago
So quietly, peacefully,

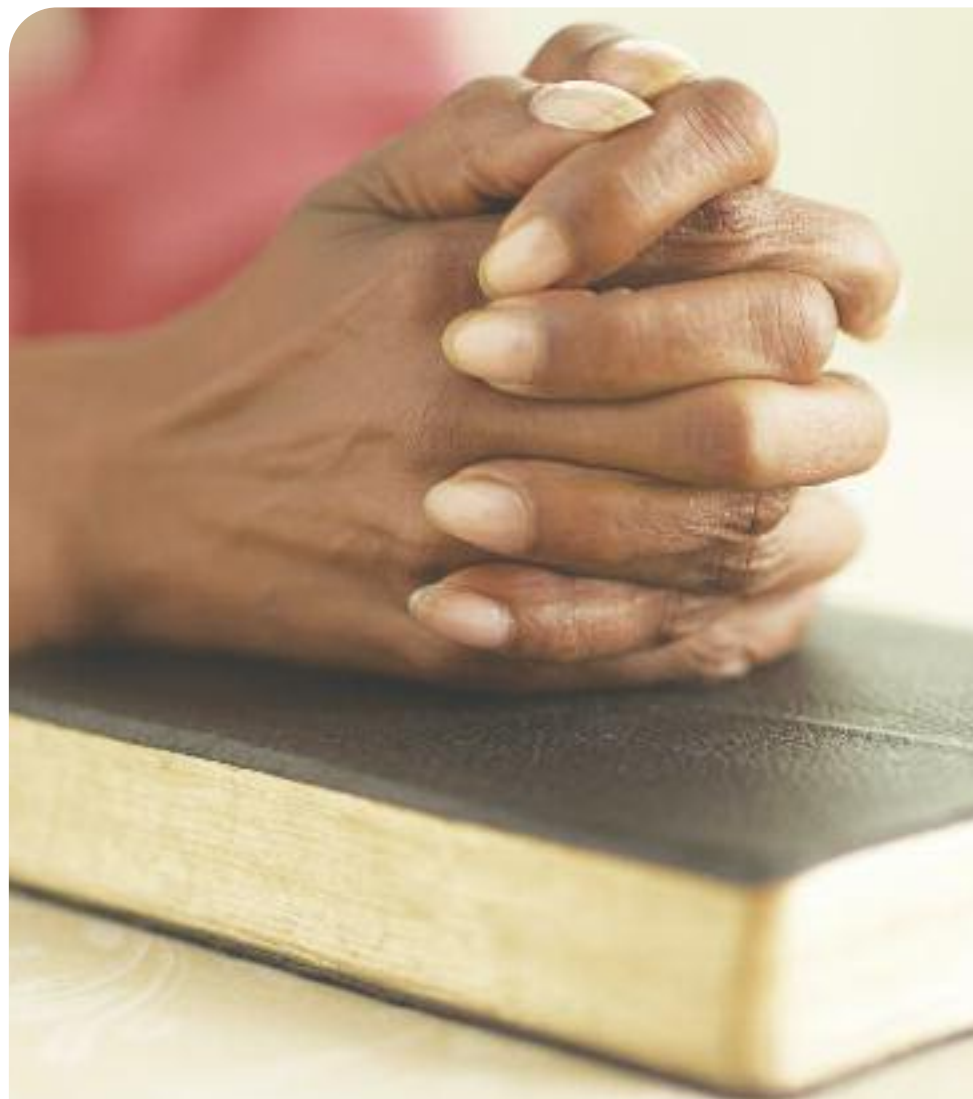
you entered our world
And through your love,
your guidance, your sacrifice
You taught us to be good and
kind to one another - to everyone.

Help us to look inside ourselves
to find you,
So that together, we may bring true
happiness and peace to everyone.

Help us to look beyond ourselves
so that we may embrace our world,
and ease the pain.

Thy night is silent;
Thy night is holy.
Lord, bless everyone with the
joyful calmness of Your arrival.
Amen.

Derek Becher (1998), Canada



Our Faith

What are the two basic elements required for the forgiveness of a Christian's sins to occur in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

What is required for the forgiveness of sins is the person who undergoes conversion and the priest who in God's name gives them absolution from their sins.

What must I bring to a confession?

Essential elements of every confession are an examination of conscience, contrition, a purpose of amendment, confession, and penance.

The examination of conscience should be done thoroughly, but it can never be exhaustive. No one can be absolved from his sin without real contrition, merely on the basis of "lip-service". Equally indispensable is the purpose of amendment, the resolution not to commit that sin again in the future. The sinner absolutely must declare the sin to the confessor and, thus, confess to it. The final essential element of confession is the atonement or penance that the confessor imposes on the sinner to make restitution for the harm done. (YOUCAT questions 231 & 232)

What sins must be confessed?

Under normal circumstances, all serious sins that one remembers after making a thorough examination of conscience and that have not yet been confessed can be forgiven only in individual sacramental confession.

Of course there will be reluctance before making a confession. Overcoming it is the first step toward interior healing. Often it helps to think that even the Pope has to have the courage to confess his failings and weaknesses to another priest - and thereby to God. Only in life-or-death emergencies (*for instance, during an airstrike in wartime or on other occasions when a group of people are in danger of death*) can a priest administer "general absolution" to a group of people without the personal confession of sins beforehand. However, afterwards, one must confess serious sins in a personal confession at the first opportunity. (YOUCAT question 233)

Why are priests the only ones who can forgive sins?

No man can forgive sins unless he has a commission from God to do so and the power given by him to ensure that the forgiveness he promises the penitent really takes place. The bishop, in the first place, is appointed to do that and, then, his helpers, the ordained priests.

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St Anne's Choir



On August 26th 1860 the small country church of St Anne, was formally opened and 155 years later the parish is still thriving. The parish of St. Anne's incorporates the villages of Plumpton, Weeton and Wrea Green but also attracts a congregation from a much wider area, such is the appeal of the church and its community. The church is in Westby Mills, just across the A583 on the road from Wrea Green to Singleton. The village itself was replaced by a reservoir. But fortunately the church was left standing!

Parish Pastoral Council

The day to day running of the church is managed by the Pastoral Council, which grew from the Finance and Management Group and was set following the Diocesan Constitution. There are now 10 members each using their gifts for the benefit of the parish. Meetings are held 4 times a year and are relaxed but with serious discussion. "So far we have achieved much in respect of building work on the Presbytery and Church (A Grade II listed building) with still more in the pipeline. We look to the needs of the Parish Community and ensure that the sick and elderly are visited. We constantly review the life and all parish activities as we believe we are an inclusive parish with a caring outlook looking to foster a Christ centred community" said Judith Appleton PCC Secretary. Judith added "The love of God spurs us on to work for our parish with a smile."

Weekly bulletin

For a long time St. Anne's has had its weekly bulletin prepared by the priest in charge who is also the parish priest of Holy Family, Freckleton – just another job on top of his already heavy workload. But Mary Cuffe explains that "recently we went solo producing our own customised bulletin under his guidance, it allows a bit more space for our own snippets of news, appeals for fundraising events, appeals for practical help, as well as the usual 'bread and butter' weekly information. So far the feedback from parishioners has been quite positive and we plan to continue and develop it to perhaps include more parish news".

value placed on the church community by its members" said Mary.

Childrens Liturgy

The Children's Liturgy is an important part of Sunday Mass. Katy Wilson describes how St Anne's offers a Children's Liturgy during term time for all young children including babies and teddies! "One of our volunteers takes it in turn to run the session and the number of children can vary between two and eight. We begin by reading a short child friendly version of the Gospel followed by a short discussion on the relevance of the reading today. This is followed by either a fun activity or colouring which we then display on our board. We all then return to Mass and join the Offertory Procession where the children can show their work. They are all delightful and it can be quite surprising what answers they come up with!"

After Mass Social

After Mass everyone is invited to coffee and cake in the Presbytery. Monsignor Canon Turner retired to St Anne's in October 2013 and always gives us a warm welcome and tells us amusing stories over coffee and cake. Betty presides over making tea and coffee and provides a wonderful selection of delicious home-made cakes which are eagerly awaited and enjoyed by both young and not so young parishioners. In this she is ably assisted by Teresa and daughter-in-law Trish who wash up afterwards. The youngest member of the team is Amelia, aged 3, who likes to help with putting away the cups and saucers with Grandma Sheila. Then parishioners say their goodbyes to one another and slowly drift away to home and Sunday lunch.

SVP

The SVP is a very successful and thriving group in the parish. Les Fragle, SVP chair explains that "Our SVP Conference was formed in 2009 and now has members from the parish of The Holy Cross (Kirkham and Wesham). The mission of the Conference is that of the SVP Society which is to help in any way possible people who are in need be it due to health, social or financial issues.

On a regular basis we visit members of the community including several of our older parishioners who now cannot get to church due to infirmity or poor health, those recently bereaved and others who have been

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Mass Listings – December 2014 & January 2015

Sunday December 14th at 6.00 pm
Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)
Our Lady & St Joseph, Carlisle

Sunday December 21st at 3.00 pm
Fourth Sunday of Advent
St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster

Wednesday December 24th 10.30 pm
Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
(Carols & Confessions at 10.00 pm)
Shrine Church of St Walburga, Preston

Thursday December 25th at 10.30 am
Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Shrine Church of St Walburga, Preston

Sunday December 28th at 6.00 pm
Sunday in the Octave of the Nativity
Our Lady & St Joseph, Carlisle

Sunday January 11th at 6.00 pm
Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
Our Lady & St Joseph, Carlisle

Sunday January 18th at 3.00 pm
Second Sunday after Epiphany
St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster

Sunday January 25th at 6.00 pm
Third Sunday after Epiphany
Our Lady & St Joseph, Carlisle

Shrine Church of St Walburga, Preston
Mondays – Fridays: 12 noon, Low Mass
Saturdays: 10.30 am, Low Mass
Sundays: 10.30 am, Sung Mass

Mass is also celebrated every Sunday at 8.30 am at St Mary Magdalene, Leyland Road, Penwortham and 11.30 am at St Catherine Labouré, Stanfield Lane, Leyland.

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referred to us by the Parish Priests or Prison Chaplain. Over the years we have made hundreds of visits and it is very satisfying to be able to spend some time with these important people who may well be alone and not see anyone between our visits.

As a result of our very generous congregations we have been able to fund numerous projects including: Higher Education for Indian Students, town visits for offenders working towards parole, uniforms for primary school students, holidays for disadvantaged children, Sudan baby feeding programme, St Cuthbert's Drop-In Centre all in addition to donating to several SVP Disaster Fund appeals.

On a practical note and again thanks to generous donations we have supplied food parcels to ex-offenders' families each Christmas and now we are supporting the Fylde Foodbank with a donation box at each church.

We would like to encourage more people to become members to insure the continuation of the vital work of our Conference and the Society".

Fundraising Activities

Paddy Parker tells how fundraising has been an integral part of church life for over a hundred years! (Although Paddy hasn't been around that long!)

"On Saturday July 2nd 1859, The Tablet newspaper reported a fundraising event for the new church at Westby Mills; 'the building of which had now reached window height'! A raffle raised the then considerable sum of £174 and 5 shillings. The Willows Amateur Acting Club performed 'The Merchant of Venice', The Glee Club sang and a renowned local comic singer, W. Yates, rounded off the entertainment. So, from the outset, fund raising became a normal part of the parish social life. Regular domino and whist drives, dances and Charity afternoon teas were held in the school. After the school closed the social life continued in church and in parishioners' homes. The choir often sang carols around the local village of Wrea Green raising considerable sums. Many choirs, orchestras and even a Russian pianist have performed in the church. Several themed evenings have taken place and paper weights, CD's, bookmarks and four books have been published by parishioners. As part of our 150th celebrations we held a

Contemporary Flower Festival which was a huge success. Flowers have always been an integral part of our worship, naturally Easter, Christmas and special occasion pedestals etc are extra but six or seven displays are regularly presented to beautify the church. The surrounding communities have invariably supported us for which we thank them. All fund raising needs volunteers and we have a dedicated stalwart team and we hope that with more people helping may it long continue in the future".

Music & the Choir at Westby

Cath Chambers remembers St. Augustine of Hippo's famous quote 'To sing is to pray twice' and if that is the case the congregation at St Anne are fortunate to be led by Dave and Jackie Clark the organist and his choir leader wife. Along with a small but enthusiastic group of choristers and a violinist they are invited to sing at weddings, funerals and special occasions as well as weekly Mass.

Ecumenical Activities

St Annes and St Nicholas C of E Church have a long tradition of joint worship thanks mainly to the work of our much missed Deacon David Done (RIP) and his wife Helen. This included an annual 'Rogation Service' where the congregations come together at farms around the community to pray for God's protection on the crops, His blessing on the farms, the people, machinery and livestock for the agricultural year so that all may play their part in a bountiful harvest. This is followed by a wonderful homemade supper and good fellowship with our wider Christian family. There is a joint monthly parish magazine as well as ecumenical services and socials.

Finally

Although a small rural parish we have been blessed to have a priest and dedicated lay people to work together for the Glory of God, in worship and serving the needs of our world today.

It is a joy to be part of such a warm and welcoming Christian community. Any newcomer is made to feel special and valued, so please come along and join us if you can!

"For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" - Isaiah 56.6

Cath Chambers

Rogation Sunday at Westby



Fr Kevin Lowry,
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Paddy Parker,
chief social
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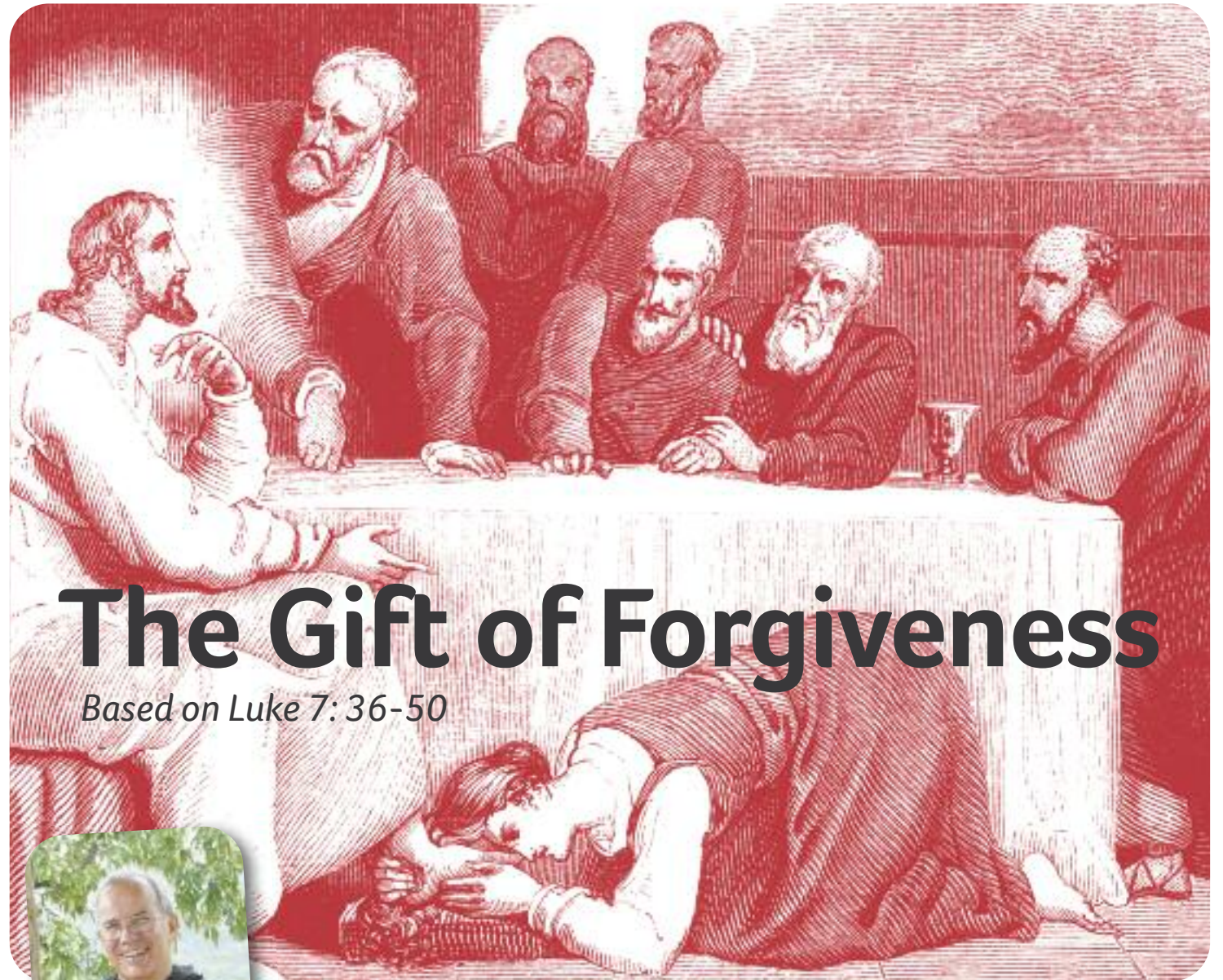
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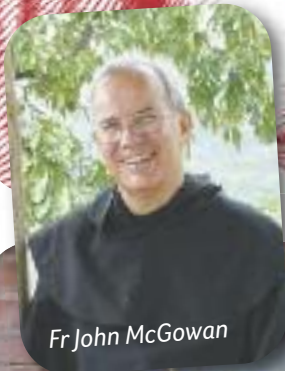
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The Gift of Forgiveness

Based on Luke 7: 36-50



Fr John McGowan

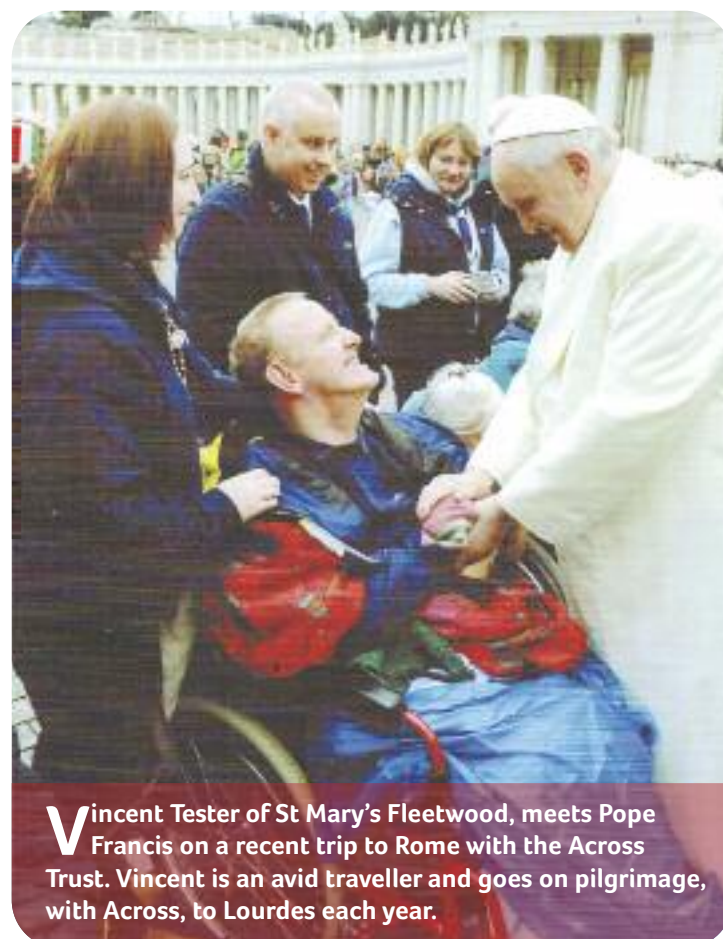


The scene painted by Luke of the woman coming in to anoint Jesus' feet, with an alabaster jar of ointment is powerful. You can feel the tension in the room, because not only is she uninvited but she 'had a bad name in the town.' All eyes would have been on her as she came in, all conversation would have stopped. Yet Jesus seems unperturbed by her. It is his host who is upset and even scandalised but Jesus isn't scandalised. He lets her touch him and even kiss his feet. She must have been forgiven her many sins, Jesus explains later.

He says nothing to the woman and she says nothing to him. And yet there is an understanding between them which is so much deeper than words. Jesus lets her touch him and perform this most humble, intimate, of gestures: it is so tender and loving. Had she done this to the host he may well have kicked her away, to show to others that he was disgusted by this woman and what she represented.

We are not told if she earlier confessed her sins to Jesus but it seems likely. We can presume she had been a slave to sin for much of her life but now she feels free. Her tears express a torrent of gratitude to Jesus. She knows Jesus has forgiven her; she could not have done what she did if there had been any doubt about this. To experience forgiveness is one of the greatest graces of life.

One of the great privileges of priesthood is to listen to people confess their sins. It is truly wonderful when someone, who has carried the burden of sin for many years, is freed of that burden. Often there are tears. It is a special moment for both penitent and priest; a moment of great grace. When Jesus forgives, through the action of a Priest, he forgets. The slate is wiped clean. One is free again, as free as a bird. And yet, it is not uncommon for people to ask regularly to be forgiven 'for the sins of my past life.' Sometimes it is just a habit, other times people really mean it: even though they have confessed their past sins they keep repeating this in confession. What they don't realise is that it is to doubt God's mercy and, therefore, to doubt his word. When God forgives we are forgiven. End of story. There are no longer any sins of our past life, unless we deliberately chose to conceal them. What a wonderful grace that is. Even as a child, after confessing my sins on a fortnightly basis, I felt great. God wants us to feel great, not to be burdened by sin. What a difference it makes when we realise we are forgiven, and to know that God loves us as we are, not as we should be, or could be, but as we are. *Fr John McGowan, Vocations Director at the Carmelite Retreat House, Preston*



Vincent Tester of St Mary's Fleetwood, meets Pope Francis on a recent trip to Rome with the Across Trust. Vincent is an avid traveller and goes on pilgrimage, with Across, to Lourdes each year.



Do you want to put God first in your life and find out what His plan is for you but you don't know where to begin?

If the answer is 'yes' then you are beginning the process called discernment; discernment helps you discover God's will for you, it helps you discover your vocation. God has a plan for us all, young and old alike, sometimes it takes a long time to discover God's plan.

How will I know what my vocation is in life?

One way to know is that you feel "at home" with your decision, at peace with it. This is logical, for when God created you, He already had your vocation in His mind and when you discover your vocation peace will be yours. At first this may seem overwhelming but that is not a bad thing, for in time God will give you the grace to accept.

How will I understand?

First and foremost discernment can never be achieved alone. Discernment must always have a communal and ecclesial dimension because no vocation in the Church is ever "private". I have recently met a number of young men who told me that they have already discerned their vocation and it is to be married. When I ask them who helped and guided them to this knowledge, their answer was, 'No one, I just know that marriage is my vocation.' My advice to them is they need to go back to square one with their discernment. Don't get me wrong, quite possibly they have arrived at the proper conclusion, but the way in which they got there was not the right way.

The example and scriptural foundation for this truth of discernment in communion is in the story of Samuel and Eli in the First book of Samuel.

One day Eli was asleep in his usual place. His eyes had lately grown so weak that he could not see. The lamp of God was not yet extinguished, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was. The Lord called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am." He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I did not call you," Eli answered. "Go back to sleep." So he went back to sleep. Again the Lord called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me." But he answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep." Samuel did not yet recognize the Lord, since the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me." Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the Lord came and stood there, calling out as before: "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Sm 3:2-10,)

How can the Lancaster Vocations team help you?

Over the coming year we will be offering a number of Vocations Discernment Days and weekends. Please be assured that these discernment days are not recruitment days for priestly vocations, they are to help you discover your vocation in the Church. If the team helps you discover that God is calling you to priesthood, married life, religious or consecrated life then the team has achieved what they set out to do.

Fr Darren Carden

To find out more contact one of the team:

Fr. Darren Carden – priest@lancastervocations.org

Tel: 01772719604 / Mobile 07552795060

Fr. John Millar – jwmillar1@gmail.com

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Priests processing into St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster – courtesy of the Bishop's Blog

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Over the 'Church' Garden Wall

Today Benjamin and I are in high spirits as we walk down the road towards the Church. It's a cold crisp morning and the start of Advent.

The wood burners are working at full throttle and there's that palpable feeling of happiness and joy that accompanies Advent as children play excitedly and complete strangers smile and wave, as they pass. Benjamin is happily singing his favourite Christmas carols as he jumps in the fragile golden leaves which are banked up against the red bricked wall which surrounds the church garden. We make our way through the iron-gate. As we do something causes me to turn and look at a plain green Holly Tree, full of red berries. To most, it may seem like a simple evergreen tree, but to me it represents years of happy memories. Images flash into my mind of a very young girl running up the old path, past the shiny holly tree, into the church, and up the rickety wooden steps straight into the choir loft. And it was from this very choir loft where my great love of music started, which led me to sing in choirs and choral societies, for many happy years.

Feeling a tug on my arm, Benjamin brings me back to the present as he ushers me in the direction of the garden. As I look around, I realise that my work in the church garden is almost over for this year. The earth is now at rest and it's a chance

for gardeners also to do the same in order to store energy, ready for fervent activity in Spring and Summer next year. I have nourished the ground and planted up the large plot with scented Daffodils, which should bring some brightness to the church garden in the winter months, from mid-February onwards. I have also planted a variety of Daffodils which hopefully should flower just in time for Mother's Day, so I am hoping and praying that the Parish of the Holy Cross will have their very own supply of Daffodils for Mother's Day. There are just two more tasks to do. This afternoon, I will be planting sweet pea seeds, which will be hardened off in a cold-frame, ready for an April planting. The final task is to make a list of annual flowers to grow for use in the Church, taking into account Holy Days and Saints Days, and to start preparing a Planting Plan.

As I watch Benjamin play with the frosted spiders webs hanging from the trees, I go and look at the Holly Tree once again. I feel a tug on my jacket "You're going to be very busy soon, aren't you Mum?" Trying hard to contain my amusement, I look at him and notice that this is indeed an earnest statement. "Why do you think that Benjamin?" I reply. "Well you will be making circles (meaning wreaths) for everyone in the graveyard. School told us a few weeks ago that we should always remember the people in the graveyard, so Christmas would

be a good time to do that, wouldn't it. That is why you were looking at the Holly Tree, isn't it, Mum?"

But the real reason I was looking at the Holly tree was that I was remembering Christmas Eve two years ago when the Holly Berries seemed to have lost their sheen and Christmas felt flat.

Everyone suffers some loss in their life at one time or other and my loss was my hearing, which had been progressing over a number of years. Being unable to hear my own voice was making singing or any other musical activity unfathomable. But even more difficult, was being unable to pick up children's voices or the other Mum's voices at the school gate. The combination of the two had left me feeling absolutely devastated. So that evening as we left for Christmas Eve Mass, I wasn't my usual happy and excited self, I felt exhausted, sad and despondent. The thought of being unable to join in singing Carols was unthinkable. But, something was to happen that night that would change my outlook in a goodly way. As Mass was starting and the congregation stood up to sing the first Carol, I noticed that even before I had heard the sound of the organ, I had actually felt its vibrations through the rickety wooden floor. It was at this moment when I started to make sense of my life and accept it as it now was. Like the last pieces of a jigsaw that fall into place, I fully realised that life was completely different now, and that I had to go with the flow, and make the best use of the senses I have, even though it would mean big adaptations to most areas in my life. It was a small realisation with a very big impact.

And that night as we left church, in absolute complete earnest I wished

friends a Happy Christmas and went home feeling happier and lighter. Deep down, I sensed that somehow that night I had reached a turning point. And I had.

So this year, two years on, as I look at the very same Holly Tree I see the lustre in its verdant leaves and its colourful glossy berries. I also notice the shafts of golden winter sun filtering through the bare branches of the plum tree ... and I can't help feeling ever so excited, but ever so slightly nervous, at the thought of practising Christmas Carols on the harp with friends later! Peace really did come down that Christmas. *Susan Wood*

Wishing you all a Very Happy Christmas from the 'Church' Garden

So what can we be doing in our Garden in the month of December:

- Absolutely nothing - have a well earned rest and enjoy spending time with family and friends.
- Order Seed Catalogues and start preparing planting plans for next year.
- Make sure our feathered friends are well provided for and do not go hungry or thirsty over the winter months.

Susan Wood is married to David and Mum to nine year old Benjamin, who attends St Joseph's School, Wesham. Susan is a writer and trainee horticulturist in her third year of study and is absolutely delighted to be trialling a cutting patch within the walled garden at St. Josephs Church, so that flowers can be grown for the use in the church. If you would like to contact Susan please use her email address susan.m.wood@tesco.net or via her writer's facebook page **S.M. Wood**.

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Earlier this year parishioners, ecumenical friends and two atheists from Kirkby Stephen joined Fr. Alex Makulski on pilgrimage to Cracow, Poland. The pilgrimage was organised by Maria Horoyd. All remain in our prayers.

There were many high points doing the pilgrimage including Mass celebrated in the Basilica of the Divine Mercy where, in a nearby Convent, St Faustina Kowalska lived, worked and prayed until her death in 1938 and a visit to the John Paul II centre where we were able to see a variety of memorabilia and artwork depicting his life. Later in the pilgrimage we visited Wadowice, the birth place of St John Paul II and gathered for Mass in the Church of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary where he was baptised and confirmed and where he served as an altar boy.

There was a trip to the Shrine of the Black Madonna where we took part in a wonderful open air Mass. Lots of the people attending the Mass were from Fr Makulski's hometown. We visited the Wieliczka Salt Mines, St Mary's Cathedral in Cracow, Wawel Royal Castle and Cathedral, Zakopane and last but not least Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp where we particularly remembered St Maximilian Kolbe who volunteered his life to save another. **St John Paul II, St Maximilian Kolbe and St Faustina Kowalska pray for us.**

Janet Harvey



Last month I was introduced to Zac – Zacchaeus to you – the chap in Luke 14 who climbed up a tree to see Jesus. But he's Zac to the participants in the Sycamore Tree course. You see, it's easier for prisoners to remember the nickname.

We heard about the Sycamore Tree project as part of our course-cum-retreat at Boarbank Hall for people involved with prisoners and their families. It was a small but very dedicated group – chaplains, a social worker, prison visitors, a parent, a

volunteer involved with restorative justice programmes. Zac's story is used because it is the archetypal story of restorative justice: confession, repentance, reparation and reconciliation – the goal and the achievement of Sycamore Tree of the thousands of prisoners who follow the course.

Sycamore Tree needs volunteers. So do many other imaginative projects that help to support our overcrowded prisons, in conditions that are tough for staff and inmates alike. As Catholics we need to be

involved – as individuals and as parishes. Prisoners are not an alien species – they are part of our own communities, members of our own parishes. There are so many things you could do – a small thing like buying a Christmas present for a prisoner to give to her child – a large thing like becoming a regular visitor. But most of all, keep prisoners and their families in your prayers and in your consciousness. 'I was in prison and you visited me,' said our Lord, and he continued, 'I tell you, inasmuch as you did this to one of the least of my brothers and

sisters, you did it to me.' (Mt 25.33-40).

Want to help?
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Prison Fellowship International:
(which runs the Sycamore Tree Project)
www.prisonfellowship.org.uk
Caring for Ex-Offenders:
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Bishop and faithful in procession

Christ the King Church



Bishop praying with the little ones



The inaugural Mass, celebrated by Bishop Campbell, at the new church of Christ the King, Blackpool on 11th September 2014 marked the completion of a multi-faceted project, overseen by Canon Robert Horn in its initial stages, and latterly by Fr David Burns and Fr John Winstanley, the present parish priest. The project brought together Christ the King Church and primary school and St Mary's College on one site. It also marked a return to a site just a stone's throw away from where the first Mass of the parish of Christ the King was celebrated in a converted shippon at Layton Hill Convent.

Mass was preceded by a short liturgy to close the old church and give thanks for sixty years serving the community of Grange Park. This was followed by a procession to the new church led by Bishop Campbell and Fr John Winstanley, designed to reassure the community that although the old church is now closed the Catholic community will still be present to serve the people of Grange Park for many more years.

Staff and students from St Mary's joined parishioners at the old church to take part in the closing liturgy. The Academy samba band led the procession towards the new Christ the King Church and was greeted by students from both of the schools. Bishop Michael was then accompanied by Head teacher Simon Eccles, Stephen Tierney, Executive director of the BEBCMAT academy trust, Simon Stewart the Lead Chaplain from St Mary's and members of the senior leadership team, student council and parishioners to the main entrance.

Bishop Michael blessed the doors to the fully refurbished St Mary's and then moved through the academy to the Chapel and each of the learning houses. Each area had a learning house liturgy with students celebrating the start of term and praying for a successful year ahead. The entire student community were able to observe the blessing of the doors to their main accommodation spaces in the academy, as well as a beautiful wooden statue of the Madonna and child on the main corridor.

Bishop Michael then continued the ceremony in Christ the King Catholic Academy where he was met by Mrs Sarah Smith, the head teacher and other members of staff. The school was fortunate to receive capital funding as part of the Primary Capital Build Programme and Eric Wright Construction began work in November 2010. Bishop

Michael was invited to bless the delightful new environment. Mass was concelebrated with a number of local Parish Priests including Canon Robert Horn who was instrumental in the design planning process in the early days. The Bishop blessed the doors of the school and unveiled a plaque to reveal the school's motto, "Believe, Belong, Become" as well as sharing a number of prayers as part of the service. The children in each class greeted Bishop Michael and shared a short liturgy with him. It was a special day in the life of the school and one that will be remembered fondly in the years to come.

Representatives of the academy also joined the congregation for Mass. The academy wind band who accompanied a number of the hymns and primary school choir led the singing. The whole day was a wonderfully enriching experience which allowed members of our Catholic community to start a new chapter in their spiritual journey. It also marked a fantastic start to the new academic year for the staff and students at St Mary's and Christ the King.

Many of the furnishings and artefacts from the old church have been transferred to the new site, notably the Altar made from the largest single piece of Lakeland slate ever quarried at that time. This was originally situated at St Michael's junior seminary Underley Hall and was transferred to Christ the King when the seminary closed. Other features from the old church include stained glass windows, the large crucifix on the sanctuary, the holy water stoops, the altar furniture and the baptismal font. An outstanding feature of the new church is the floor to ceiling cross shaped window and amber coloured windows which bathe the sanctuary in a warm golden light.

The church, which can seat sixty to eighty people, is furnished with chairs and kneelers purchased with money donated by the parishioners. New Stations of the Cross, a statue of Our Lady were bought, and a statue of St Joseph was refurbished, thanks to money generously donated by the families of deceased parishioners. We are also grateful for donations from other parishes which paid for the Sacristy and Confessional furniture.

Since the opening, Christ the King and St Kentigern's have become one parish. Life has come full circle! Fr John Winstanley and the parishioners now look forward to the future together; serving Christ in a large and very busy residential part of Blackpool.

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Richard's Sense of Faith



Happy are those who work for peace, God will call them His children.

A former St Benedict's, Whitehaven, student has returned to the school but in a whole new capacity: Lay Chaplain.

Having come to the school in 2009 from St Joseph's High School Workington it wasn't until a diocesan trip to Lourdes that Richard Teasdale felt something more. "It was in Lourdes that I cried and grieved for the loss of my dad for the first time in over two years. The anger I had inside me was gone. At that moment I knew there was something more. It was in that moment that I saw everyone else was joyful and I wasn't. I wanted that joy and the one thing that they had in common was their faith." Richard is now one of the youngest Lay Chaplains in West Cumbria and this is his story of finding the catholic faith and what it means to him.

After leaving St Benedict's sixth form Richard took up a voluntary placement at Castlerigg Manor, in Keswick: "When I started working with young people at Castlerigg in 2011, I never would have dreamt of being where I am now. Nor did I want to be where I am now if I am honest. When I started working at Castlerigg I wasn't even a Catholic, now being a Catholic is my work, and my social life. And to tell the truth, I am not ashamed of that, in fact I am extremely proud".

After two years at Castlerigg and being baptised and confirmed at 19, Richard moved to Fleetwood and worked as an Assistant Chaplain at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School. However, he was only at Cardinal Allen a short time before hearing of the job available at St Benedict's. "At first there was an obvious draw. It was a move back home, I attended 6th form at St Benedict's, and it was financially more viable. It's funny how we think of these reasons initially, but I soon became aware that these weren't the real reasons I returned to St Benedict's. I moved

here because that was the next step in my life. It was moving up the career ladder and there was something, some reason God wanted me here. It's never easy to recognise but there is a definite purpose God wants me to serve here as there is with every single member of staff and student in this school. We are given these opportunities in order to grow and prepare ourselves for our next step".

On another more recent trip to Lourdes Richard recalls "An 'old dear' said to me, 'I don't think non-Catholics should be allowed to come on this Pilgrimage.' I had to let her know before she went on that I first went to Lourdes as a 'non-Catholic' and non-believer and it changed my life. Young people need to experience these exposures the same way I needed to experience them."

I approach my work the same way as I try to approach everything I do. For young people we can tell them who God is, what to believe and how to live all we want but it can quite easily go over their heads. What needs to happen is for them to experience faith, live faith and what it is to be a Catholic – to really live it. The best way I can provide that is by living out my faith joyfully, not shying away from who or what faith makes me, it has turned me into the man I am today. My faith makes me happy and if I am able to show that to people, then they will hopefully want some of the same, just like I did.

Our school has a unique opportunity to help students to live out that faith and see others living out theirs. Chaplaincy isn't so much a person but a whole group of people, living out a joyful faith, leading by the example of their lives and forming a bridge across the whole school with the purpose of sharing a sense of faith.

Happy are those who work for peace, God will call them His children.



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Lancaster Diocese

Christmas Mass Times

Ansdell
St Joseph
Christmas Eve
10.30pm Carols
11.00pm First Mass of Christmas
Christmas Day
9.00am Family Mass
New Year's Day
12:00 Noon Mass

Blackpool
Christ the King
Christmas Eve
6.00pm Vigil Mass
St Kentigern:
11.30pm Carols followed by
12.00 Midnight Mass
Christmas Day
9.45am Family Mass

Blackpool
St Bernadette
Christmas Eve
6.00pm Children's Mass
11.30pm Carols followed by
12.00 Midnight Mass
Christmas Day
9.30am Mass

Lytham
St Peter
Christmas Eve
7.30pm Carols
8.00pm Vigil Mass
Christmas Day
10.30am Family Mass

Preston
Our Lady & St Edward
Christmas Eve
5.30pm Carols
6.00pm Christmas Mass
8.00pm Syro-Malabar Mass
11.30 Carols and Readings
12.00 Midnight Mass
Christmas Day
10.00am Mass of Christmas Day

Preston, Goosenargh
St Francis
Christmas Eve
6.30pm Vigil Mass
Christmas Day
9.30am Mass of Christmas Day

St Annes-on-the-Sea
Our Lady Star of the Sea
Christmas Eve
6.30pm Family Vigil Mass
12.00 Midnight Mass
Christmas Day
9.30am Mass
11.00am Mass

Whitehaven
St Begh
Christmas Eve
5.30pm Carol singing
6.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass - 1st Mass of Christmas
11.30pm Carol Singing
12.00 Midnight Mass
Christmas Day
8.00am Mass at Quay St
10.00am Family Mass
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