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The Catholic VOICE *of Lancaster*

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“
*There are two conditions
in order to follow Jesus,
hear the word of God
and put it into practice.
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” Pope Francis

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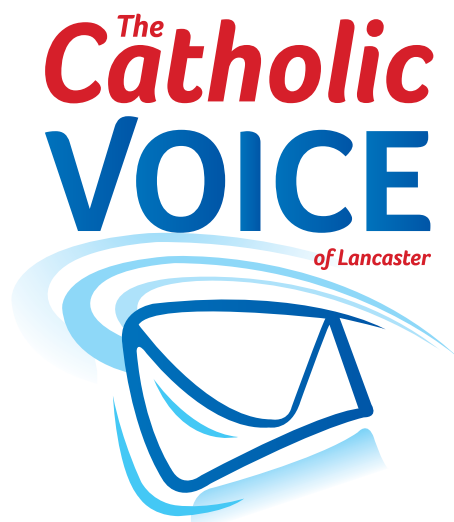
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EDITORIAL

As the Synod of Bishops on the Family prepares to resume its discussions this month, it is a good time to reflect on family life. Jesus began life on earth in a loving family, who taught him the faith and a trade, and came looking for him when they thought he was lost. His parents gave him sufficient emotional and physical space – within a network of extended community/familial relationships – to make leaving him in Jerusalem possible! He, for his part, accepted his parents' authority. His Mother believed in him enough to initiate his ministry, though it would mean, in a certain sense, losing him. She stood by him at his bleakest hour. *In this way the family incarnates God's love for His people.*

A Path to Holiness

For most adults, marriage is the path to holiness. **If holiness means embracing God's will, and putting away all self-interest, family life provides rich opportunities for growth.** It is no use a married person trying to live the life of a religious: the paths are different, even if there are parallels. The priest and religious renounces the gifts of marriage and family by fidelity to the round of prayer, service of God's people, the practice of the evangelical counsels, and for the religious the constant rub of community life. The wife and mother's path may involve getting up from prayer to cook tea, changing a nappy when she feels like putting her feet up, foregoing a new dress to pay for music lessons or a school trip for the children, or smiling when she feels like screaming. A husband finds his wife speaking too much irritating, but listens with devotion and loyalty. It is precisely through the areas which seem uncongenial that we get the edges rubbed off us.

Pray together

There is a compelling need to put God first in family life. **Pray as a family, if you can.** Put the Bible in a visible place in your home, and read a passage of it each day. The Rosary is a beautiful way to introduce prayer to children. Myriad blessings come through consecrating yourself and the family to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Many married people find the time for personal prayer after their spouse has gone to sleep or in the early hours of morning.

Play together

It is often said that *'the family that prays together stays together'*. One might add *'the family that plays together stays together'*. Do you take time to play with your children or spend

quality time with your teenagers/spouse, following their interests and having fun? Think back on your own experience of play as a child. Was it enhanced by the presence of an interested adult? Children want love and tenderness, as well as firm boundaries and limits: parents who are joined up with one another and the school, confident in their authority, without being authoritarian. Have a family meal at the dinner table every day without the TV on. Reflect on something positive that has happened to each person, and be grateful to God. Discuss the negative, and let it go (*let peace in*), again being grateful to God.

Pray for Peace in families

Couples need to pray particularly for peace within their families, and guard themselves vigilantly against anything which threatens to disrupt marital unity. Children feel a combative atmosphere between parents. Children may develop symptoms to divert their parents' attention from marital conflict. Where separation has occurred, Pope Francis, in a recent Wednesday audience, urged parents to speak well of the other parent to the children.

Challenging circumstances

The reality for most people is not the charmed life of the *'idyllic Catholic family'* with a spouse who shares the faith and six bouncing children, enjoying barbeques between family prayers. Perhaps you can't conceive; perhaps your child has behavioural difficulties, an eating disorder, an addiction or a sickness; perhaps you are a single parent, or your spouse doesn't share your faith and the children have lost interest in church, you or your spouse is unemployed, your marriage is on the rocks, or one of you has a mental health difficulty. What to do in such circumstances? Still pray. **Pray. And pray some more.**

A certain woman experiences such physical agony she doesn't know how she will get out of bed in the morning. Her answer is to identify herself with Jesus' Cross saying, *'I unite myself to your passion Lord'*. And she gets up, and says nothing. Day after day.

God in His wisdom has permitted your circumstances and can be trusted to work through them for His mysterious purposes. It is no use thinking *'how much easier it would be to pray, if only...'* He knows your situation, and works through present realities, not hypothetical alternatives. There has not been a saint yet who did not carry a heavy cross. It is through such crosses that He brings the Kingdom into being.

Family Life:

A Little School of Holiness



If holiness means embracing God's will, and putting away all self-interest, family life provides rich opportunities for growth.



Kos a Jewel in the Lord’s Ocean

This year went I the first time to the Greek Island of Kos. I stayed just outside of a small village called Kardamena and visited the village Greek Orthodox church of Our Lady of Intercession. I also went on a boat trip round the island where we visited three small islands and on one of these islands lives one man in a beautiful house with a chapel, I took many pictures which will help me in my icon writing. It was a wonderful experience for me to see these amazing icons and wall paintings in the beautiful Greek chapels. There is also a Catholic church in the capital of the island in Kos town, originally built by the Italians.

On a trip round the island we went to the ruins where Hippocrates founded the first hospital on Kos. Hippocrates is considered

by scientists to be the founder of medicine. He may have been the most important doctor of the ancient times and the best representative of the Medical School of Kos. He was also a profound philosopher and humanitarian. He was born in Kos in 460 BC and following his father’s profession (*who was a Doctor*), he studied medicine at the Asclapio school of medicine in Kos. He studied patient records and therapy methods. At a young age he left Kos and worked as a doctor in Thaso, Thraki and Thessalia. Soon his reputation spread all over Greece. It is said he helped the Athenians during the period of the great plague of the Peloponissos war. According to tradition he reached the gates of the Persian King Artaxerxi but then refused to offer his services. He died of old age near Larissa.

The first mention of the early Christian period in Kos is connected to the visit of the disciple Paul which is mentioned in the book of Paul. This was recorded in the minutes of the first Ecumenical Synod of Nice in 325 and was signed by the Bishop of Kos, Melifron. The big earthquake in 469AD signalled the change in the structure of architecture from the Roman times to Christian times.

However, the next earthquake was very strong in 554AD and destroyed the city of Kos. This made it difficult for the city to get back to its former glory. Life continued along the same lines till the Arabic Invasion in the middle of the 7th century. From the middle of the 7th century Kos belonged to the Kibireoton or Aegean or Samos. In the second half of the 11th century we are informed that

Nikiforos Melissinos, husband of Evdokia who was the sister of the Emperor Alex the first Komninou resided in Kos where he owned a lot of land. At the same time a large number of royal related people came to Kos like Christodoulou who founded the monastery of Theotokou in Old Pyli.

Christodoulou exchanged the land in Kos with land in Patmos where he founded the monastery of St John Theologou. From the 11th century till the beginning of the 14th century Kos had many administrative changes up until the occupation by the Knights of Ioannites.

Kos is a lovely island, the people are very welcoming and friendly and very proud of their beautiful island. A beautiful gem in Our Lord’s ocean.

Teresa Smith





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All change at Castlerigg!



There has been lots of change the past couple of weeks at Castlerigg Manor. In July we said goodbye to the 2014/15 youth team – a big thank you to Tilly, Amy & Lauren, who have moved on to new jobs and further studies. Grace and Misha are continuing to serve young people at Castlerigg for another year. At the end of July we also said goodbye to Ruth B, who has moved onto university. And in August both Ruth Corless and Fr Philip Conner moved onto pastures new. Thank you very much for all your hard work over the years.

At the start of July, Bridget from Lancaster joined the team as a Retreat Leader. Mid-August saw the arrival of Fr John Moriarty, the new Director and Chaplain of Castlerigg Manor, and five new members for the youth team. Anke is from Belgium, Austin is from the USA, Aleksandra is from Poland, Sarah is from Portsmouth and Tom is from Manchester. So along with Misha from Ukraine and Grace from Fleetwood, there is quite the international vibe going on! Please keep the team at Castlerigg Manor in your prayers over the next year.

Come Follow Me

Over the past year young parishioners from around West Cumbria met at Castlerigg the first Sunday of each month. Everyone follows everyone these days on Twitter and Facebook, so we called our group, Follow, and the group's aim was to help young people to follow Christ.



In short the youth group which lasted a year was designed as a discipleship programme. The format was simple: everyone gathered for a meal at 6pm. At 7pm we would have some praise and worship, and then a talk on a particular aspect of discipleship: what it means to be a disciple, resisting the Devil's tactics and the art of spiritual warfare, what our faith has to say about love and relationships, how our faith can shape the way we use our recreation, dealing with emotional issues – all very practical matters on how to live out our faith and be a witness. After the talk, the group would break up into smaller groups for some sharing time, and then we would go to the chapel for night prayer, sometimes a little bit of adoration, or a meditation. It was a simple format, but one that seemed to work.

Month after month a group of about 12 to 15 young people appeared from as far afield as Penrith, Workington and Whitehaven, and the friendships that developed helped to break the isolation that many young people feel in their parishes where there are often few other young people. Jenny, 17, from

Cockermouth, writes that 'in addition to the delicious food, each week has been such a great way to step back from the hustle and bustle of day-to-day life and just think about my life and my relationship with God. I've really enjoyed Follow, especially being able to meet other young Catholics (something alarmingly rare!) and I enjoyed addressing issues that actually impact upon us directly or matters within the faith that the Sunday readings don't usually address. The session on acknowledging and fighting the devil was a talk I will always remember - I wish I had had the talk earlier!' Ellie added, 'It's been a great mix: fun, games, food, faith, friends, peace, interest, life advice, learning, people, young people of my faith who don't live 200 miles away'. Owen, 13, added, 'It's been great to enjoy the garden at Castlerigg and being in a new place as it is more special to be out and fresh than at home', and another young person added, 'I've learnt to believe in things even when it seems hard to and I feel it's hard to carry on. It's great to talk to people who believe in the same thing as you and I love the whole 'family' feel about Castlerigg'.



Being a YOUNG Catholic Today

Lauren, 19, Fleetwood

The other day I came across a passage within the Bible from Luke which stated, 'He astonished the crowds', and unexpectedly it got me thinking more deeply about the message God was wanting to give to me.

First I thought about what it means to be astonished, to be amazed, impressed, overwhelmed? When I thought more deeply about it I realized that in my life I found it very hard to 'impress' one person, whether it be because I looked up to them or because their presence overwhelmed me. In fact I realized that many-a-time I have failed to impress just one individual, and yet here Jesus was astonishing groups of people.

I then thought about my life and I asked myself when have I felt astonished, and is it God who astonishes me? After deep thoughts I realized I had two answers to this question. Firstly, simply waking up in the morning, meeting individuals who inspire and teach me, looking at my surroundings, the beauty, and being

able to feel love and joy in my heart, I would say 'Yes, this is Jesus astonishing me'.

My second reply would be when I've felt angry and hurt, when I have completely turned my back on the Lord and gone astray, when I've believed he has left my side. And yet, looking back on these moments, I realised that it was when I was the weakest and it was in those times that God carried me and made me the strongest. From this Scripture I had an image of a sweet jar and a friend slowly taking a sweet out one at a time and myself only realising when the jar was empty. I thought this represents all of our lives: we have a best friend, Christ who slowly takes our pain and worries away, yet being human beings we expect a sudden change, something to happen right away. But this image of one sweet being taken away at a time helped me to realise that, in fact, as I look back on my life, the Lord has been at my side. It was me being too foolish to recognise this and how he has slowly transformed my life and given me gifts and talents throughout my ongoing journey to become a disciple of His.

Saint for our times

Its pilgrimages like the one I made to Turin in June that only come around once in a lifetime, and you know when you get that opportunity and are able to take it that it really is God's work.

We were there merely 3 days but somehow we did so much it felt like a week or more. The second we got off the plane we were on a coach heading to Sassello – the home town of Blessed Chiara Badano – where we visited her tomb and met people who actually grew up with her. From there we visited the Shroud of Turin which was mind blowing. The next day we made a short journey to the home and work place of Saint John Bosco, and on the Sunday we had Mass celebrated by Pope Francis followed by an audience with him.

Despite everything we visited, saw,

heard and experienced, the part of the pilgrimage which really struck me was the life and work of Saint John Bosco, he really is a saint for our times, and we have so much to learn from him.

We can read all about his life online and read books written about him, but to actually visit his home and see what he actually achieved takes it to a whole other level.

Saint John Bosco dedicated his whole life to working with the street children of Turin, at a time when there was great poverty in Turin, and no one was prepared to help. He spent months looking for the right building before eventually he was given a barn, he converted it into a chapel with the help of the children, giving them a sense of purpose. The first Mass there

was celebrated on Easter Sunday, which is so fitting because with Christ's resurrection so too did the mission of Saint John Bosco come alive. He got jobs for the young men he was helping, but before long he realised they were being treated horribly on building sites so gave them jobs himself. They began to expand and build around the chapel, building a home for the priests and children. The priests' homes were unique because if they wanted to move from room to room they had to use a balcony on the outside because John Bosco believed they should always see the children playing and the children should always be able to see them. His own room look directly over their courtyard as they played football and other games.

As his mission grew, more and more young

people joined, many going on to become priests. He began working on a Basilica which he dedicated to Mary help of Christians. Despite having no money he convinced builders to begin work, borrowing money from them so he could pay them.

With everything I learned from Saint John Bosco that day, one thing I will always keep with me from his example is that, as Christians, we do things because they are right, not because they are popular, and sometimes we have to go against the grain.

If we all learned from Saint John Bosco's example, had his will to work, and his will to do the work of Jesus on earth, we would live in a very different world.

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Children pray to Our Lady



St Benedict's High School in Whitehaven, is blessed in many ways. Not least in each of its students being instilled with 'a sense of faith' throughout their academic journey which they carry with them long after they have left. To help this spiritual journey the school is fortunate that the Diocesan Shrine to Our Lady of is located at Cleator just five minutes away from the school.

All Year 7 students visited the Grotto in the last school year and learnt more about Our Lady and the Rosary. They began in the classroom, by learning the Story of Lourdes which led to the students going to the school chapel and making their own Rosary beads; most of the year 7's made one for themselves and one as a gift for someone at home.

The next stage saw the students heading up to the Grotto at Cleator, where they would talk more about the story and miracles of Lourdes as well as the story of the Grotto in Cleator.

The communities of Cleator and Cleator Moor were dependent on the mining and iron industries, and during the Great

Depression of the 1920s and 1930s, times were very difficult for many. Fr. Clayton (*priest in Cleator from 1904 to 1954*) arranged for funding to provide employment for some of the parishioners. Fr. Clayton bought some land adjoining the church's site and asked for volunteers to help construct a replica of the Grotto at Lourdes. These volunteers were rewarded with vouchers for food and clothing. People still make pilgrimage to Cleator to visit the Grotto each year.

Hearing about the story of this shrine, the students then had a chance to explore the grounds; they looked at all the different statues of Saints and had a chance to learn about them and speak to Richard Teasdale, school chaplain.

After returning to the Grotto, the students were presented with their own set of rosary beads, a miraculous medal and a booklet helping to explain them. They then prayed a decade of the Rosary with many of the students offering up their own intentions and for their class before returning to the classroom refreshed and bursting with the joy of Mary and Jesus.

Richard Teasdale

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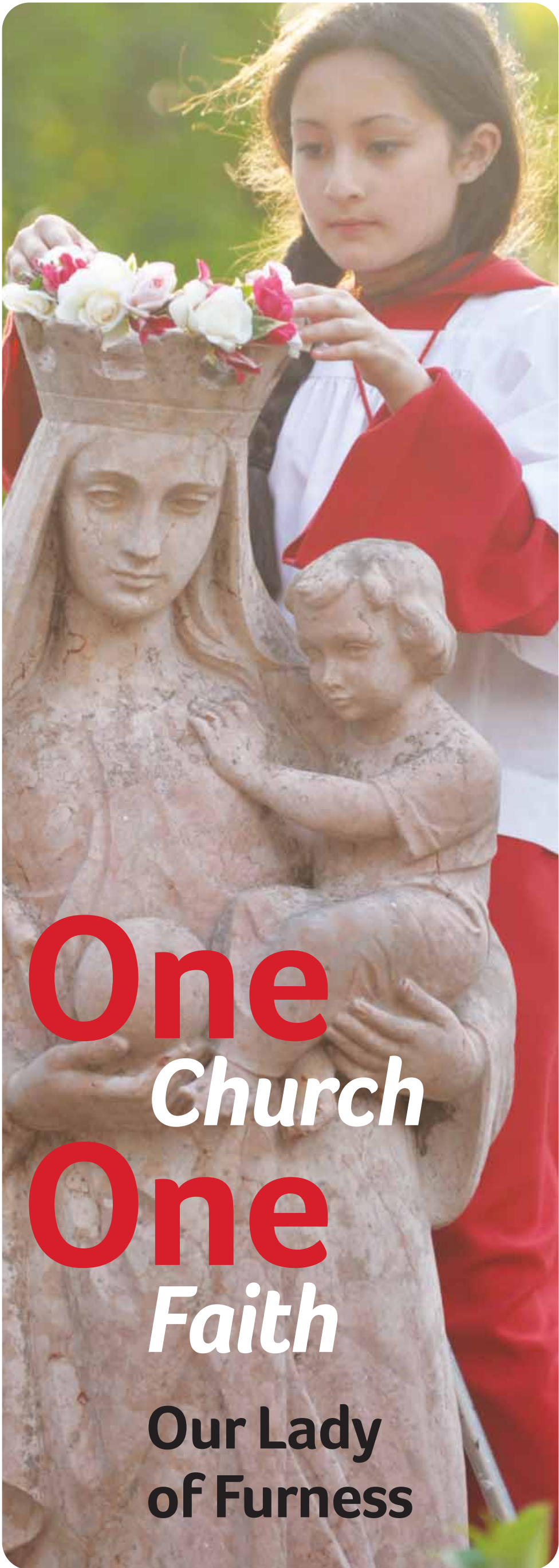


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The changes that have taken place at Corpus Christi Catholic High School in Fulwood Preston over the past two years, can only be described as transformational. Since new headteacher David Hubbard took up post in April 2013, the pace of change has been rapid.

Changes introduced have included an impressive new uniform, a highly effective approach to managing behaviour, a strong focus on improving teaching, new systems for improving attendance and new reports to parents.

The most recent inspection in October 2014, confirms that Corpus Christi is 'improving quickly' and recognises that 'the headteacher has established an atmosphere of ambition, aspiration and high expectations.'

In 2014, Corpus Christi was the second most improved school in Lancashire for the proportion of pupils attaining 5 or more GCSE grades at A*-C including mathematics and English.

Mr Hubbard says 'Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and reflect the huge importance that we attach to respecting the unique dignity and value of every person. Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and the courtesy that they show to our visitors is always very impressive.'

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Back in July parishioners in Barrow-in-Furness gathered for our annual parish feast day. The celebrations offered us a chance for the four churches and five schools of the parish to deepen our unity as one Catholic community in the town, following the merger of Barrow’s churches into one parish in July 2013.

We prepared for the feast day with a nine-day novena, with people gathering each night for prayers for different intentions. On the last night of the novena, Bishop Campbell joined us, and over 200 people gathered in the church to ask the prayers of our patroness, Our Lady of Furness, before processing outside the church to crown her statue. Afterwards there was a Ceilidh in the Parish Centre, and people from the different churches had the chance to socialise and dance together.

Each church and school of our parish has an icon of Our Lady of Furness, displayed throughout the year. On the feast day itself, people processed through the town from the different churches and schools, carrying the icons and converging on St Mary’s church for Mass at midday.

A full church of people of all ages attended the Mass, at which Fr Manny Gribben, our Parish Priest, spoke about Our Lady’s role as one who watches over us and prays for us. At the end of the Mass a trumpet and organ fanfare was played, as the icons of Our Lady of Furness were honoured with incense.

The celebrations ended with a street party outside the church and a social in the Parish Centre, where we enjoyed a hog roast, bouncy castles, a football tournament for the children and plenty of good food. All in all, it was a great celebration of our unity as one parish, and a joyful renewal of our dedication to Our Lady.

Fr Andrew Allman



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Lancaster Vocations

The PRIESTHOOD

“Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, said that he send labourers into his harvest.”
St. Luke 10:2

Are you being called to be a priest?

‘Do not be afraid of what God asks of you! It is worth saying yes to God! In him we find our Joy.’

Pope Francis

A priest is someone who courageously responds to the call of God in his life, to become a preacher of His Holy Word, and a minister of His Sacraments. A priest’s life is one of service to God’s people, gathered together in His Church, where he preaches and lives the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Who does God call to be a priest?

God can call any man he chooses to become a priest, any time he chooses, and under any circumstances he chooses. You have only to join a gathering of priests anywhere, or visit a seminary, to realise that there is no such thing as one single ‘priestly type’ that God calls to be a priest. Priests are people as varied as any other group, widely different in interests, temperament and background. Sometimes you may even be surprised by whom God calls, especially if He is calling you.

One of the first things that you may think of if God is calling you to priesthood, is that you are not worthy. You are not alone, no one who is called is worthy. You may question God, “You know that I am a sinner, you know my weakness, there are much holier men than me why don’t you call them?” God in his divine wisdom calls those whom he wants to call. If you have the feeling that God is calling you to the priesthood, remember that He will prepare you for the work of a priest by His grace; nothing is impossible to God. The only way to know if God is calling you to the priesthood is to begin to discern His call.

What is Discernment?

Discernment is the process by which we pray and reflect on what God wants us to do with our lives. As Blessed John Henry Newman said, ‘God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.’ So discernment is essentially a process of discovery, where we find out who and what God is calling us to be. We have a service to fulfil, which in turn will make our lives more fulfilled.

How do I discern?

The best first step in this, sometimes difficult process, is to follow the words of the Lord said to those whom He calls in Scripture, “Be not afraid!” Whether it was an angel announcing good news,

or Christ speaking to His disciples, God’s first words are often “Be not afraid!” once you are open to hearing the Lord speak to your heart, the process of discernment can begin. Discernment must involve prayer, the willingness to seek out quiet in an otherwise noisy world, a desire to know God’s will for your life. All men should be open to the fact that God may be calling them to serve Him as one of His priests.

Discernment can never be done alone, it must always have a communal and ecclesial dimension, because no vocation in the Church is ever “private”. Why not contact one of the team who will be able to help you discern your vocation in life?

‘God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.’ Blessed John Henry Newman

What has God created you for?

Prayer for Vocations:

Lord of the Harvest, Heavenly Father, your Son Jesus Christ taught us to pray for labourers to be sent into your great harvest. In this Year of Priestly Vocations in the Diocese of Lancaster we ask you to stir up in men’s hearts your call to the priesthood. Send your Holy Spirit, so that those you call will know how to respond with a generous heart. Father, raise up from among us holy and zealous priests so that the Gospel may be preached, the poor may be served with love, those who are suffering may be comforted and your people may be strengthened by the Sacraments. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady of Lourdes, Pray for us. St John Vianney, Pray for us.

Do not be afraid...Think Priesthood!

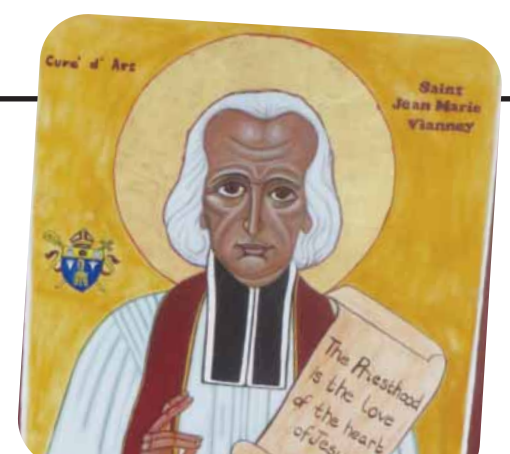
For further information with regard to vocations to the priesthood contact one of the team:

Vocations Director

Fr. Darren Carden
Email: priest@lancastervocations.org
Tel: 01772719604
Mobile: 07552795060

Assistant Vocations Director

Fr. John Millar
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Lytham celebrates 175th Anniversary



The end of July brought to a close a year of celebration for St Peter's, Lytham.

The year included lots of events including the unveiling of a plaque at Lytham Hall where the story of the parish of St Peter's began; an Ecumenical Songs of Praise on the Feast Day of St Peter & St Paul; a Flower and Music Festival; Mass celebrated by Bishop Campbell when the peal of 6 bells were rung for the first time in many years; a parish Ball; an exhibition of the history of the parish, the events capped by Jenny Pope being selected for Rose Queen at the famous Lytham Club Day.

On sale now is a book by parishioner Sue Shakespeare entitled 'The History of the Catholic Faith in Lytham since 1190'. This book charts how the worshipping community developed around a small Benedictine cell established in the grounds of Lytham Hall and grew through Penal times and beyond culminating in the building of the present church and current activities. The cost of the book is £7.50 with proceeds going to the St Peter's Bell Restoration Fund. If you would like to order a copy, please visit www.stpetersoflytham.org.uk or telephone Christine Entwistle on 01253 722353.

Christine Entwistle

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BOOK REVIEW – NOT QUITE ALL THERE

Easy to read in a conversational style, certainly vivid, at times entertaining but always thoughtful and provoking best describe this selection of short homilies by one our PPs Fr Anthony Keefe who currently ministers to St. Thomas the Apostle, Cloughton and Ss Mary and James at Scorton.

The title of the book might make you think that the author is slightly ‘off the wall’ or quirky but on the contrary that couldn’t be further from the truth. The title in fact reflects that all of us are ‘Not Quite All There’ and there is an on-going need for us all to deepen our relationship with God.

Take for instance this opening paragraph from a homily on ‘To be the same as Jesus Christ’: “In your minds, you must be the same as Christ Jesus.” Oh heck! Am I? Are you? Am I heck as like. Are

you heck as like. What would it involve? St Paul spells it out: total self-emptying in love, giving up His status, giving up His life, all in self-abandoning love for an ungrateful human race. Are we even slightly like that? Maybe. Maybe not. Probably, much more unlike than like.

This particular homily concludes: The time will come in all our lives when doing God’s will provides a challenge and we will meet that challenge far better if we have struggled along the way. After all, the ultimate challenge is to be ‘the same as Christ Jesus’ and that will involve a lifelong struggle.

So if your spiritual life is in need of a battery charge then you could do no better than acquiring this little book of homily gems.

Published by Blessed Hope publishing, ISBN 978-3-639-50076-9.

Offering Hope to People in Prison

Many prisoners (as many as one in four) in a Youth Offenders Institution are held in conditions bordering on solitary confinement spending 23 hours out of 24 confined to their cells according to the Howard League for Prison Reform.

‘One in four boys in Feltham Prison is spending 23 hours a day locked up in his cell in conditions which amount to solitary confinement’. HM Inspector of Prisons

This situation is widespread in our prisons as reported by HM Chief Inspector in February in his report on Rochester YO1 and by the Prison Reform Trust in their report ‘Strangeways 25 years on’ in March: ‘A prisoner who is unemployed because there is no activity available for him might spend 22 hours a day, and eat all his meals, with another prisoner in a small cell designed for one, perhaps eight foot by six foot, with an unscreened toilet’ HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Against this background, prayer groups become very difficult to organise, and

prisoners struggle on their own. Roman Catholic Prison Chaplains are begging for Catholic Bibles and other catechetical resources to support the prisoners in their care in their journey of faith, a faith re awakened by their time inside and away from home.

“Thank you for the Catholic Bible. It is beautiful and has helped me with my faith. It has been a long journey and it has put me on the track to rightness, faith, hope and goodness” Mark HMP Isle of Wight

Catholic Truth Society Prison Appeal 2015
So far the appeal has raised just over £12,000 of the target of £30,000 by Christmas 2015. There is some way to go!

For further information about the CTS Prison Appeal 2015 or the CTS please contact Moira Forrester Fundraising and Liaison Officer :

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Website www.ctsbooks.org
Email fundraising@ctsbooks.org



Nine deacons from across the Diocese gathered at Whalley Abbey for a retreat guided by Rev. Deacon Vincent Purcell from Hexham & Newcastle Diocese.

Many references were made to Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel).

We were invited to look at ourselves in the mirror that the world holds up to the Church to see if we recognised what is being shown to us and try to put together our own response. Vincent used the word acedia which basically is about no longer caring that we don’t care. A very challenging thought. And one that we should all ask ourselves, are we are guilty of acedia? To help us walk through this disturbing concept, disturbing in the sense of the Waters of Bethesda (Jn 5:7), we looked at personal vocations, myths about vocations, the daily Decalogue of Pope St. John XXIII, the complementary opposites of discipleship and growing to become ‘Spirit-filled evangelisers’.

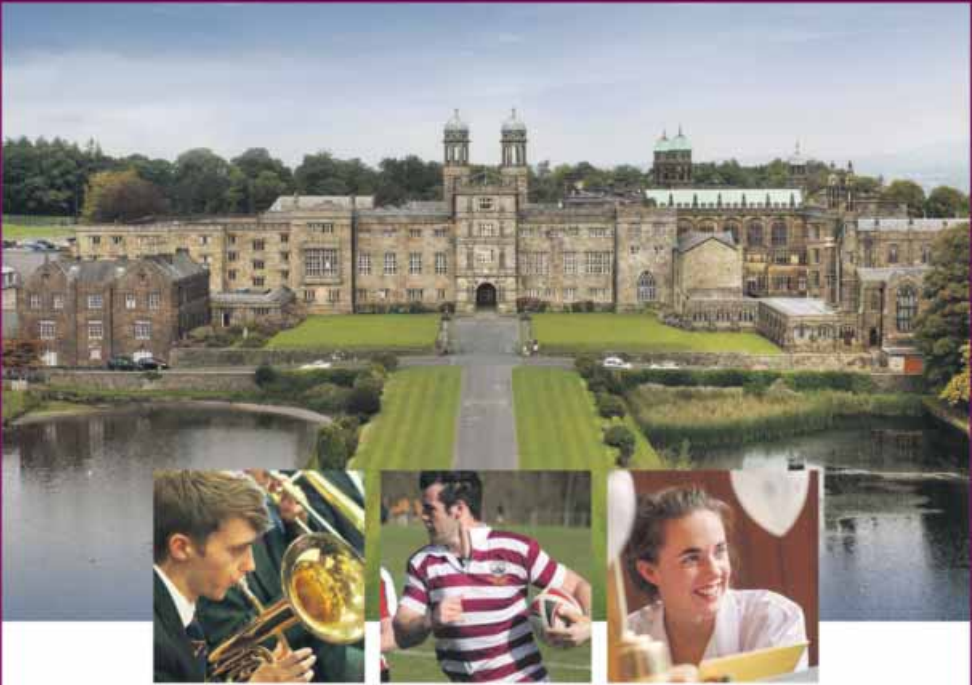
A vocation is less about a specific role and more about the way of life we called to be in the many roles we carry in our lives. Self-acceptance and self-denial are complementary opposites of discipleship. A healthy self-acceptance is very important so that we can love our neighbour as our self and self-denial is a positive action because we do deny

ourselves something for the sake of Christ and the Kingdom. Everything that we do should be done for the greater glory of God. Those taught by the Jesuits will surely remember each new piece of work was prefixed AMDG.

During the course of the retreat we were thinking about a motto that we might use that will help us if we realise that we have become a little staid. The mottos are obviously very personal but I can share these as possibilities: ‘I chose you, you did not choose me.’ ‘My Lord and my God’. ‘Father into your hands’. ‘Here I am Lord I come to do your will’. The motto is a personal reminder of what we are about. It helps us to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves down and start all over again.

Our mornings started with an hour before the Blessed Sacrament and Morning Prayer. We also had Evening Prayer each day. This was an absolute delight to be praying together and the chapel resounding to our singing. Fr. Andrew Dawson who organised the retreat celebrated two Masses for us and we had a service of reconciliation.

There was time for us to socialise together in the evening and enjoy the grounds of the Abbey in the warm summer sunshine. We are already looking forward to the next retreat. **Deo Gratias. Deacon Chris Barwise**



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St Bede's Carlisle

Blessing of the Memorial Benches



Before the end of the summer term St Bedes School, Carlisle held a short service for the unveiling of two memorial benches. The benches were the brainchild of Mrs Harmon who wanted to provide an area that children could enjoy a quiet moment or two or chat to their friends.

Year 5 students read a poem in appreciation of all teachers before Fr Jim Allen conferred his blessing on the benches. Following prayers the hymn 'We are one in the Spirit' was sung.

Louise McMillan, Headteacher

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Who? Me?



“How did you know you had a vocation?”

It's a question people love to ask. My answer is simple: ***“I knew because everyone has a vocation: me, you, David Beckham, the post-lady and the boy next door.”*** The question is not whether you are called, but to what.

Let's be more specific. Everyone is called to a life of love and service, of God (*even if they don't realise it*) and of others. Human beings were made for this, and this is the only way we will flourish. But we must each live this in a concrete way.

- Many of us are called through baptism to be faithful to the Trinitarian God we know through Jesus Christ.
- Many are called to the mutual love and service of marriage, and of caring for a family.
- Others are called to be single, temporarily or permanently, and to use their availability for different forms of loving.
- Some feel a call to the kind of job that is already shaped by the ideal of service, such as teaching or nursing.
- Others make ordinary jobs vocational through the love, care and attention they bring to the task.
- Some of us are called to specific lifelong vocations within the Church, as priests or deacons, monks or nuns, canons or canonesses, friars or sisters, consecrated individuals, or members of secular institutes. But such vocations only make sense because of the same general truths about human beings: we are all called to love and to serve, and God, in his providence, has a plan for each and every one of us.

you know whom to marry? One couple I know even “met” in hospital as new-born babies. Others have been introduced by friends, or used an internet dating agency. For some it is love at first sight, others take months or even years to make their decision. Similarly with work. One child might set her heart on being a doctor at the age of six. Another may need to grow up and try several jobs before finding the one that fits.

Everyone has a story to tell. Priests and religious are no different from the rest. Brother Michael read about his Order in a history book and fell in love with its ideals. Sr. Jane was taught by nuns and realised she wanted to be like them. Fr William felt completely content working in a bank until he visited a monastery by chance and knew in an instant that that was where he should be. Mother Elizabeth had spent several years visiting communities and comparing them before she made her choice. Fr Tom became aware as a boy that he wanted to live as closely to Jesus as possible, and saw the priesthood as an ideal way of doing that.

“How did you know you had a religious vocation?” People may ask the question out of curiosity, or scepticism, or to confirm their own faith. But some ask for a very serious reason: because they are searching themselves. To people like that, I would say, *“Don't look for a magic formula.”* The Lord calls each person in the way that suits him or her. There is only one cardinal rule: spend time in prayer. Really listen, try to be as open as possible. The Lord may want you to be a missionary on the other side of the world – or he may just be asking you to be truly open to his plans and then provide the person you are meant to marry. Pray, listen, consult your wisest friends, trust, and be open. The way will become clear. Only one thing is certain: you are called to love and to serve.

Sr Margaret Atkins, Canoness of St. Augustine
Photo Sr. Margaret pictured front left

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Wake Up the World!

**Year of the
Consecrated
Life**



Pope Francis, himself a religious, calls on all his sisters and brothers in Consecrated Life to "Wake up the World!" And to mark this special year the Women Together in the Diocese of Lancaster organised a day with the theme Consecrated Life: Sign, Call and Challenge for the Church Today.

We prayed together about the mystery of the baptism of Jesus aware that it is in that great Sacrament that we, too, are called the beloved daughters and sons of the Father "in whom is all my love". We are loved, gifted, chosen and sent to share that love with others. We pondered the Mystery of the Church in the light of the wisdom given us through Vatican II's LUMEN GENTIUM. We saw that instead of seeing the Church as a pyramid, a structural and administrative model that left the laity at the bottom of the pile, we were given our dignity as the community of the People of God and that ALL are called to holiness. But within that communion the Holy Spirit pours out a wonderful variety of gifts – charisms and the story of the development of different forms of consecrated life in the Church illustrates this.

Pope Francis describes succinctly what is common to all forms of Consecrated Life as the Holy Spirit inspires them. **"God, in his Spirit, calls certain individuals to follow Christ more closely, to translate the Gospel into a particular way of life, to read the signs of the times with the eyes of faith and to respond creatively to the needs of the Church."**

And addressing young Religious in 2013 he said "In calling you God says to you: 'you are important to me. I love you. I am counting on you.' Jesus says this to each one of us! Joy is born from that! The joy of the moment in which Jesus looked at me...Feeling loved by God we know that it is he who is calling us."

Chris Doyle spoke to us about her call as a Consecrated Virgin and how there are many Consecrated Virgins and Widows in England and indeed world-wide, though they are not so well known as long established religious orders.

Sister Maria Whistock from the Monastery of Our Lady of Hyning Hall told us about her Benardine Cistercian community of 'female monks', so-called because there is no other English word for them.

Father John McGowan ODC represented the Discalced Carmelite tradition, celebrating this year the 500th anniversary since the birth of their Foundress, St Teresa of Avila.

Sister Anthony from Nazareth House had an amusing personal story to share and explained how her congregation was related to the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Sister Zela said she was wearing two hats when she spoke. She told us not only about the Ursuline Sisters founded by Saint Angela Merici in the sixteenth century, an age when women had so little freedom, but she also described the Secular Ursulines, women who are consecrated to God but who live their calling in ordinary life, not in a religious community.

Sister Mary Pierre Jean, Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma said that even though her Order have only been in the diocese for less than two years they are already involved in diocesan life in a number of ways including University Chaplaincy and the Diocesan Office for Evangelisation.

The day was organised in response to Pope Francis apostolic letter which called on all the members of the Church "to experience this Year above all as a moment of thanksgiving to the Lord and grateful remembrance for all the gifts we continue to receive...I ask all of you to draw close to these men and women, to rejoice with them, to share their difficulties and to assist them...Let them know the affection and warmth which the entire Christian people feels for them." There was a wonderful atmosphere of warmth and appreciation amongst all who came and we were blessed in being able to celebrate the Eucharist together in the Cathedral.

Bishop Michael presided and heartened us in his reflection on the day's readings. He also came to meet us over lunch which was bountifully provided for us by the Cathedral Social Centre team.

The day concluded with a beautiful power-point presentation created by Sister Mary Elizabeth ODC which drew together in pictures, photographs and words the often hidden life, witness and ministry of consecrated life in the diocese.

Philomena Grimley SHCJ



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Outstanding Appeal



Corpus Christi Catholic High School, Preston has been congratulated by Rosa Trelfa of Cafod, for their outstanding response to the 2015 Lenten appeal.

The school raised £2,953.09, which will be matched by the Government to generate a substantial £5,906.18 in support of CAFOD's work. The amount collected is the highest amount ever raised for CAFOD by a school in the Lancaster Diocese.

Numerous World Gifts including a water supply with the potential to benefit over 225 people, together with medical outreach and various animal stocks have been chosen and purchased by each Year group to help and support many families and communities in the developing world.

There were many fund raising events throughout Lent including a special staff 'Get Me Out Of Here! Bush Tucker Trial' together with a staff and pupils 'Stars in Their Eyes' school talent competition which were both very entertaining for all and well supported. Also a prolific amount of baking by both pupils and many parents provided numerous successful and delicious 'Cake Sales'.

John Scarborough

Mr Hubbard, headteacher said that:

"The fundraising had exceeded all his expectations. Pupils and staff are to be congratulated for their hard work in support of our Lenten appeal this year, which has raised a tremendous amount in support of those who have much less material wealth than we have."

Thanks to Miss Goddard



An atmosphere of joy and gratitude filled St Peter's Cathedral as pupils, parents, parishioners, friends, staff and clergy gathered with Bishop Campbell to give thanks to God for the work of Miss Anne Goddard.

For the last ten years, Miss Goddard has been Headteacher of the Cathedral Primary School and before this held the same position in other schools around the country. Her teaching vocation spans 42 years and the celebration in July was a wonderful tribute to this.

In his homily, Canon Luiz Ruscillo reminded us of the unique role of Catholic schools in making Jesus a reality in the lives of our young people and their families and this is Miss Goddard's legacy. For Miss Goddard, the essence of life in a Catholic school is giving witness to Christ and everything that is done and achieved is a result of this.

It was fitting to so many people of all ages gathered together to celebrate Mass in thanksgiving for all that Miss Goddard has brought to their lives. Bishop Michael thanked Miss Goddard for her work as a Catholic Headteacher and educator in the Diocese of Lancaster.

We thank God for her vocation and the vocation of all who work tirelessly to bring Christ to the lives of the families who are served in our Catholic schools. *Mrs Claire Dickinson, Headteacher*

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