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# The Catholic VOICE *of Lancaster*

The Official Newspaper to  
the Diocese of Lancaster  
Issue 275 + December 2015

**INSIDE:** p05 Big Walk 2015  
p08 59th Year of Catholic  
Stage Guild North



**Give**, and it will be given  
to you; good measure,  
pressed down, shaken  
together, running over, will  
be put into your lap. **For the  
measure you give will be  
the measure you get back.**

(Luke 6:38)

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and a Happy New Year**

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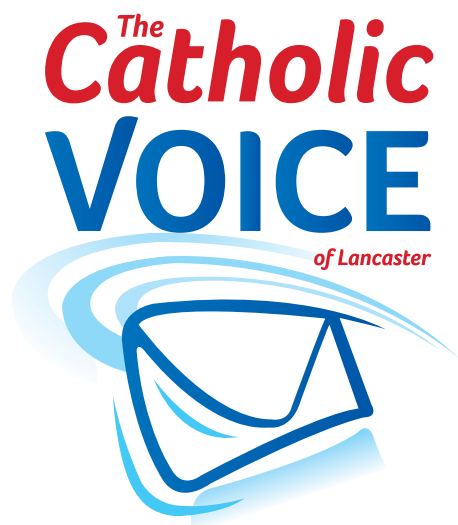
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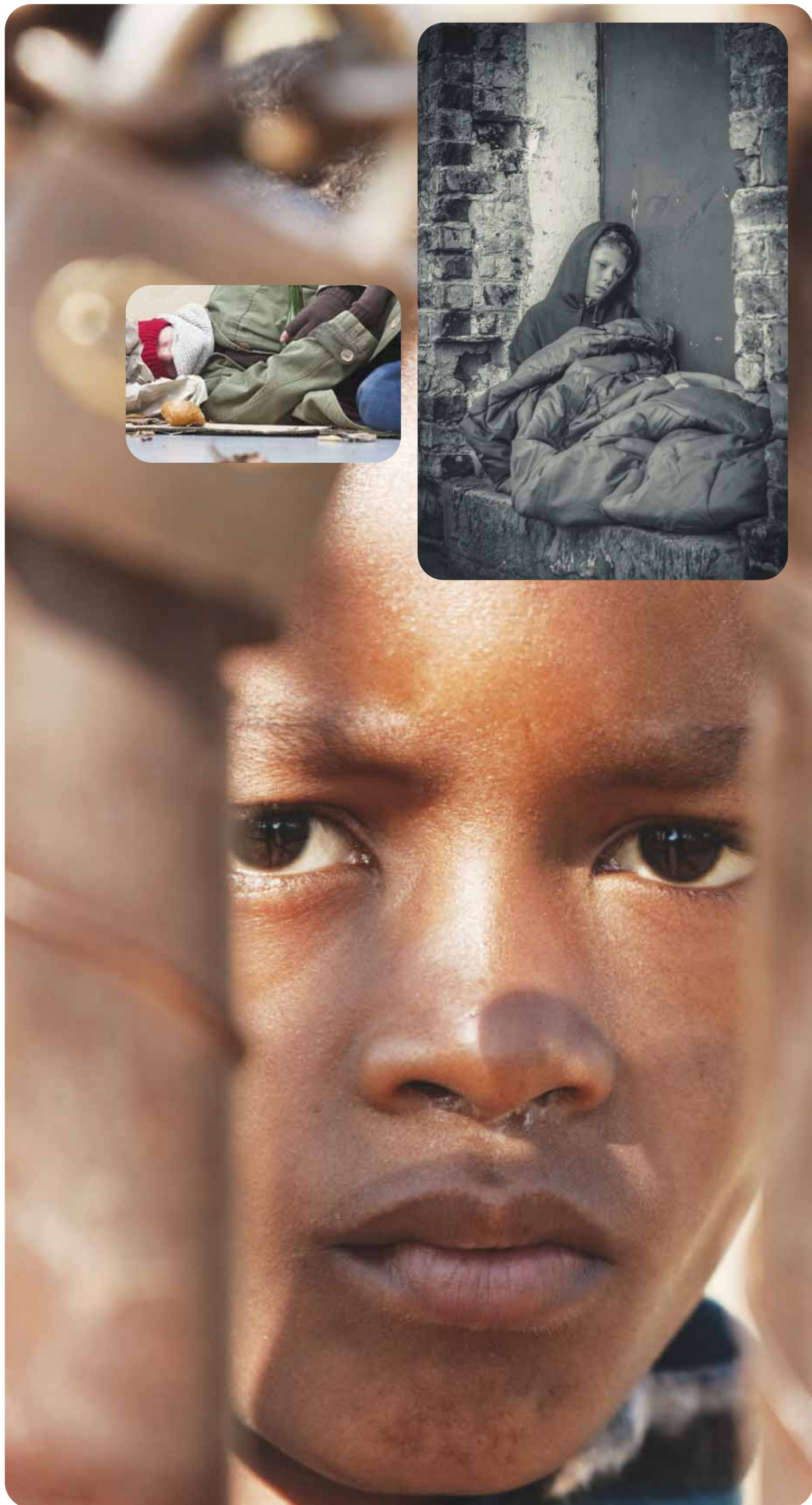
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EDITORIAL

We will all be very familiar with the iconic advert from Coca Cola with the theme music ‘Christmas is coming, Christmas is coming’. The big red truck all lit up with Father Christmas aloft is filling our screens on a daily basis now along with a myriad of other adverts encouraging us to spend that little bit extra to make our Christmas the best ever! One advert is even encouraging us to start saving now in readiness for Christmas 2016!

There is no getting away from it Christmas is a time to celebrate, to enjoy the company of family and friends and share what we have. But we have to get there first and that is why the Church gives us the season of Advent. A time to slow down or even stop and ponder the wonder of God becoming Man, not in a great hullabaloo of noise, colour and revelry but quietly in a stable amongst the oxen and ass. Incredible isn’t it that without this lonely scene there wouldn’t be a Christmas to celebrate!

Jesus born in a stable; his family having to flee from Herod’s men; followed by many as he grew to manhood serving those around him, feeding them in Word and deed; eventually rejected by them, suffering the ignominy of the Cross; but conquering death by rising from the dead.

There are lots of children across the world today being born in squalor, many families having to flee, often risking their lives to do so, from tyrannical and war-torn countries, many families being rejected because ‘there is no room for them’. You could say not a lot has changed!



Leaders of churches alongside the English Channel, joined in solidarity, have repeated their calls for people to respond to the growing crisis by showing generosity to those who are exiled from their homeland. They put before us the basic tenet of our faith that vulnerable men, women and children share in our common humanity and everyone can help them to live in dignity and contribute to civil society.

The Church leaders say that people of all faiths and none can assist by providing financial and material support, time and skills, shelter and accommodation. In this Diocese like others, we are following the lead of the Local Authorities in this regard. Above all, at this stage, we can pray and lobby the authorities to play their part.

So this Advent let’s try and get beyond the ‘must have’ ‘must do’ lists and reflect on the Birth of Our Saviour and what he came on earth to do – to save ALL peoples. And let’s see if we can put this faith in action through prayer and good works.





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## Being a YOUNG Catholic Today



Anna Jordan,  
Preston,  
18

**B**eing a young Catholic today can often be a struggle in a world where increasingly more people do not associate themselves with any religion. In today's society, where Facebook 'friends' can often be seen as a measure of a young person's popularity - I believe that the value of true friendships can often be underappreciated.

Despite attending both a Catholic primary and high school, very few of my closest friends were actually Catholic and I would often worry that Catholics were a dying species!

However, over the past couple of years- through attending a local youth group and going on pilgrimage to Lourdes twice (*amongst other things*); I have met many other young Catholics who I would say are some of my closest friends. These friendships are invaluable to me as nothing is better than knowing that they are there to offer their prayers and support during tough times. It is these friendships that have kept (*and are keeping me going*) throughout the challenges that life throws and I feel incredibly blessed to have such amazing friends as them in my life.



## Reflection on Lourdes 2015

**T**o describe our pilgrimage to Lourdes as incredible would be a huge understatement. I thoroughly enjoyed every moment and have made memories and friendships which I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Something which really struck me was the incredible atmosphere between everyone in Lourdes. Knowing that Our Lady has brought us all there, links everyone in a way which is completely special - unique and unlike anything I have ever experienced. The phrase "diocesan family" was used many times throughout the week and I think that really sums up the atmosphere between all of the pilgrims.

I really enjoyed spending time with the VIPs (Very Important Pilgrims!) and

pushing them to the Masses, services and events we had scheduled each day. This was also a great opportunity for me to get to know them better and also to hear their amazing stories. Many of our pilgrims have had some incredible adventures in their lives! I cherished these opportunities because it is not often that there is time to just sit and listen; however in Lourdes this is something which is hugely important and was very beneficial to me.

The atmosphere within the Youth section was absolutely incredible and I loved spending the week with such lovely people. We had a fantastic time together, growing in faith and friendship as the pilgrimage progressed. Our evening trip to Bartres was especially memorable, in particular being able to visit St

Bernadette's parish church and the hillside where she worked as a shepherdess. The Emmaus walk we did on the way back was also a great experience and I really enjoyed getting to know other people in the group a bit better. We had a fantastic time again on the fancy dress night- it was great to let our hair down, have a dance and show off our outfits!

After loving last year's pilgrimage as much as I did, I thought it couldn't get any better... But it did and now I can't wait to go back for the third time!

*Anna Jordan, 18, Preston*

**Applications are now open for the 2016 Lourdes pilgrimage, travelling with the Lancaster Diocese Youth Section. Please go to [www.castleriggmanor.co.uk](http://www.castleriggmanor.co.uk) for more details and to sign up.**



BIG WALK 2015



**'I will climb this mountain, with my hands wide open'**

**I**t was another wonderful year, on the 11th Annual Lancaster Diocese 'Big Walk'! A group of 16 gathered at Castlerigg Manor on the evening of Friday 4th September, to begin our walking pilgrimage to Cleator Moor.

It was probably the most international Big Walk yet, with walkers from Belgium, Germany, Poland and the USA, along with others from the diocese. On the Friday evening we shared social time, had a time of Adoration and quiet prayer in the chapel, and celebrated Aoife's birthday with an epic game of Sardines!

The next day started with Mass, along with a lovely English breakfast to fill us up for the day ahead. From there we set off in a minibus to Honister Slate Mine, where the walking would begin. We hiked from the slate mine, to the top of Haystacks, with beautiful views all the way. Lunch was eaten on top of Haystacks in the sunshine, whilst we enjoyed each other's company.

We then descended down into the Ennerdale valley, and continued our walk along to Low Gillerthwaite field centre,

where we would spend the night. We had a period of walking in silence, having an opportunity to just appreciate the beauty around us, and listen to God's voice along the way. Some people took the chance to swim in some natural pools along the way – the water was freezing!

We arrived to Low Gillerthwaite in the late afternoon, having time to relax before enjoying an amazing home cooked meal made by the ladies from Cleator – burgers, chips, salad and lots of delicious desserts!

The evening was spent doing a quiz, sitting by the log fire, and stargazing – we finished the day with night prayer all together around the open fire.

The next morning we were woken at 7.15am by Fr John's voice booming across the corridor! We then had breakfast and made lunches, before setting off on the next part of our journey. Sunday's scenery was not quite as dramatic as the previous day, but brought us alongside Ennerdale Water, and through some lovely countryside. Whilst walking along the lakeside, we had the opportunity to take

an 'Emmaus walk' in pairs. Fr John shared the story of Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and then we had time in pairs to share about our own lives and faith journeys. It was a blessed time to share with one another; especially being able to talk to people we might not usually have a chance to speak to.

We made our way through the valley, and then at last we could see Cleator Moor in the distance. There was a quick stop to change into our Big Walk polo shirts, before making our final walk to St Mary's church. People greeted us with clapping and 'Well 'dones'!' – It felt great! We joined with many others from around the diocese for Mass, and it was a great celebration. From there we said our goodbyes, with new friendships having been established, and old ones rejuvenated. Bring on Big Walk 2016!

You don't just have to wait for the Big Walk to get out on the fells...Our Diocese contains some of the most beautiful scenery in the country, so get those boots on and make the most of our beautiful mountains, coastline and countryside!

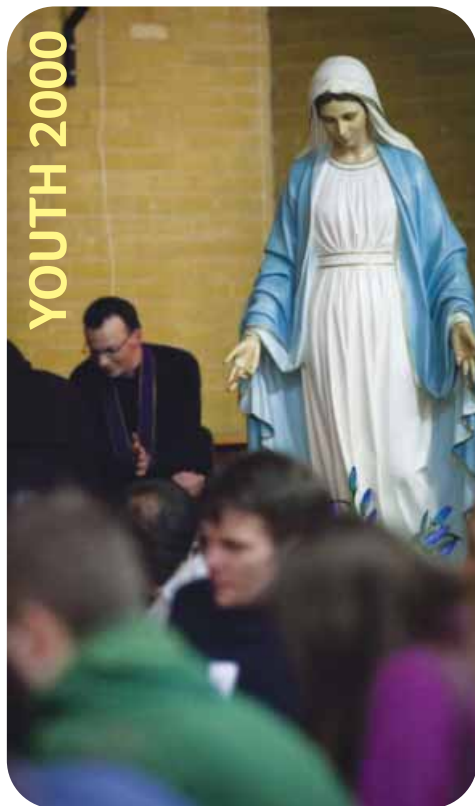
## Pressing the reset button

**T**he youth 2000 Summer Prayer Festival in Walsingham is always something I look forward too. It's the perfect way to end summer and press reset on everything before going back to work. This year was no different; simply put it's a time of great joy. A time with friends, and Jesus – I can't ask for much more than that.

There are great talks, workshops and small groups that go on throughout the weeklong retreat, but it's not those alone that make the time so special. It's all of it together, and having Adoration 24 hours a day for the entire retreat is something that can't be replaced by anything in the world. I spend the summer trying to fill my life with excitement – running, cycling, hiking, but as much as I enjoy those things none of them match up to the joy of sitting before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. None of those things press reset in my life quite the way the Youth 2000 retreat does.

Which is why when I get the opportunity to head to London for New Year – I can't say no. I don't go for the fireworks, the night out, the midnight celebrations on the Thames. I go for the great workshops, talks, small groups and Adoration – 24 hours a day for the whole retreat. It can be difficult telling people I'm off to London for New Year and not seeing the fireworks, but instead will be in Mass at the stroke of midnight ready and waiting to receive our Saviour Jesus, who comes for each of us. It's that magical moment in a packed school hall that draws me to London for New Year every year, not the fireworks. I would urge anyone to consider doing the same. Each time I go to a Youth 2000 retreat, I leave having learned something new, about myself, my faith, my friendships and my relationship with God. I leave a changed person, and I've never heard anyone say that about a fireworks display.

Youth 2000 seeks to draw young people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, lived at the heart of the Catholic Church. The next retreat is over the New Year – 29th Dec 2015 – 1st Jan 2016. All details can be found here: [www.youth2000.org](http://www.youth2000.org) /#!behold/cods  
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**C**orpus Christi Catholic High School, Fulwood, recently celebrated fifty years since the opening of its predecessor school St Thomas More, with special Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop Michael Campbell OSA. St Thomas More Catholic High School opened its doors for the first time in September 1965 with an intake of just 329 pupils. Since then, over 8,000 pupils have been educated at the St Vincent's Road site.

During the Mass in the school's sports hall, Bishop Michael spoke of the importance of the school's motto 'Unum in Corpore Uno - Together in One Body' and congratulated everyone at Corpus Christi for their inspiring witness to Jesus and told pupils to be very proud of being part of their school community. Concelebrating the Jubilee Mass - among others with Bishop Michael were Fr Paul Harrison and Fr Chris Loughran, both former pupils of St Thomas More. Amongst the many guests attending the special Mass were former

staff and pupils, including the daughters of the late Mr Bernard Loffler MBE who was the first Head teacher of St Thomas More. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of St. Thomas More the Loffler family has presented the School with a new trophy, the 'Bernard Loffler Memorial Trophy' which will be presented annually to the most improved Year 11 pupil.

Mr David Hubbard, who has been Head teacher since joining the school in April 2013, thanked everyone for attending and helping to make the Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving such a memorable occasion for all. After Mass, many former staff and pupils enjoyed a 'trip down memory lane' with a guided tour of the school led by the school's team of Senior Prefects. At lunchtime, staff and pupils gathered together on the school field for a celebratory barbecue lunch prepared by the school's award winning catering team, concluding what was a wonderful day of celebration.

*John Scarborough, Communications Officer*






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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Catholic Stage Guild North was founded by Joe Gladwin of Wally Batty fame in the Last of Summer Wine series. For those old enough to remember the Hovis bread adverts Joe featured in the commercials set to the theme 'Going Home' from the New World Symphony. Joe died in 1987 and was succeeded as chairman by Mike Gannon.**

The first meeting of the Guild was held in the BBC TV canteen which was situated in Oxford road Manchester before the BBC move to Media City. The Stage Guild then held their meetings over the top of the music shop owned by Johnny Roadhouse also on Oxford Road on the same side as the BBC a little further up the road.

The aim of the Guild is to give pastoral care to artists who require it and also if possible a little financial help to artists who may need it to help a cash flow situation.

The Guild has also encouraged members and supporters of the Guild to be involved in the charitable side of life in using their talents for the greater good in a discreet way.

All Christian traditions are welcome to

the events and pastoral care is available to all back stage staff as well as main artists if required.

Theatre visits by the Northern Guild Chaplains have proved popular and successful. The theatre visits were instigated by the late Monsignor Louis Sharp RIP from Manchester and have been established as a tradition and taken even further by Fr Denis Blackledge SJ and Fr Geoff Bottoms who is now the main Chaplain in Blackpool, the heart and soul of variety and the main show business town in the North West.

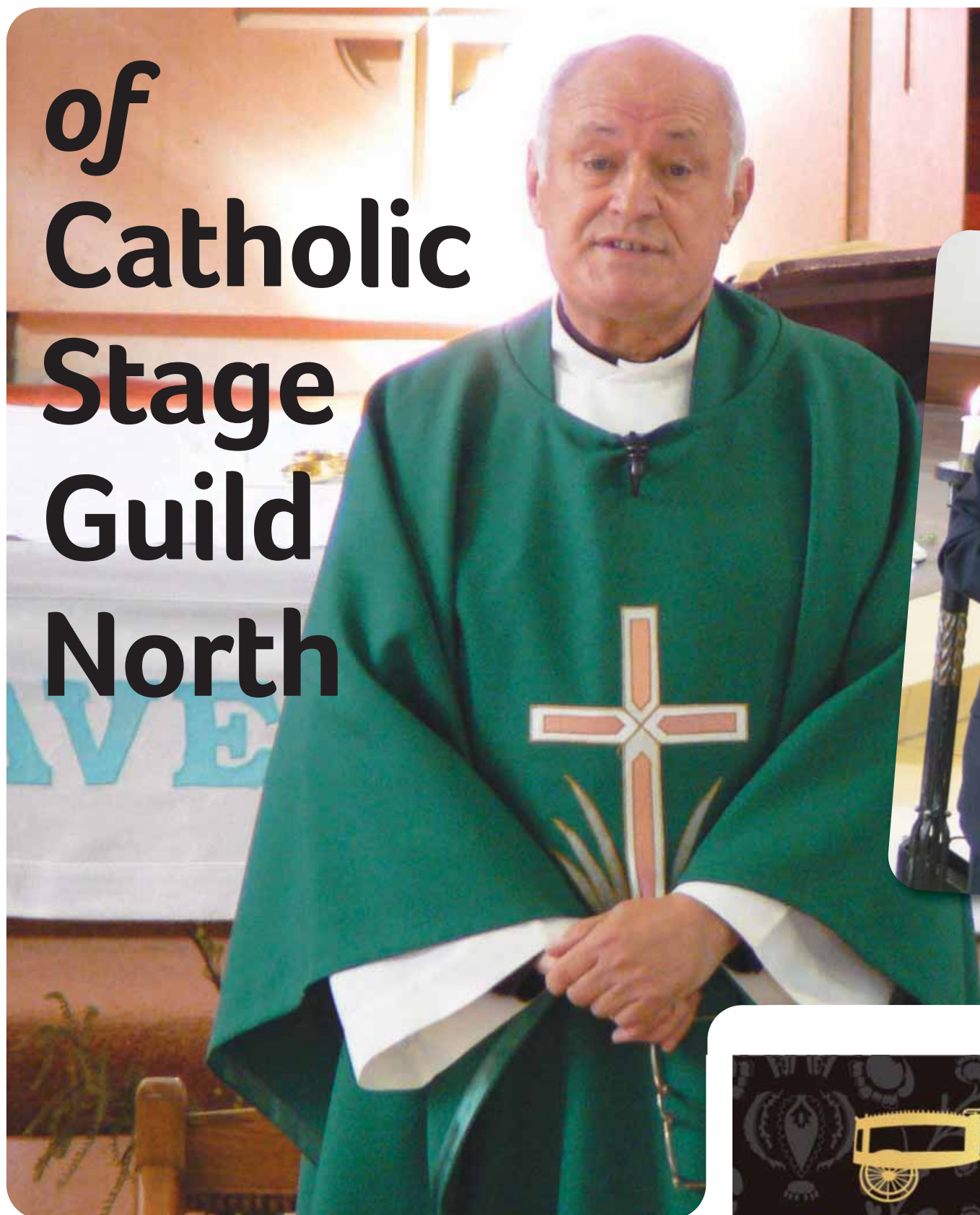
Fr Denis enlisted the help of Mike Gannon to work on and provide the music for the number of TV Mass broadcasts he was responsible for. The chaplains were the first to celebrate Mass in the Manchester Anglican Cathedral since the reformation in the 1500's.

Other notable events have included:

- A Pageant to celebrate the missions and the coming of St Augustine and St Columba to these shores. The Pageant was held at Houghton Tower on the 1st of June 1997 and was titled 'Light of the Nations'. 'Light of the



# of Catholic Stage Guild North



*Nations'* was turned into a play for BBC radio; Mike Gannon played the part of Bede in the production by Radio Lancashire's Harriet Roberts.

- Organising the music and writing some original music including the title song '*That's the Spirit*' and performing it at the Churches Together in Lancashire's Millennium celebrations held at Deepdale, the home of Preston North End Football Club. The pageant was broadcast on BBC Radio Lancashire with Joe Wilson and Fr Denis Blackledge providing the commentary. A crowd of 14,500 people turned up and enjoyed the day on the 11th of June 2000.
- Arranging a Golden Jubilee Mass at the Sacred Heart church in Blackpool on the 3rd of September in 2006 celebrated by Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue.

The Sacred Heart church in Blackpool was always the venue for the annual Guild Mass but for several reasons the Guild now gather for their annual Mass at our Lady of Assumption.

The annual Mass is the one time when

those with God given talent come together to give thanks to the Lord for their talent. It is also to show the general public that there is a special bond between those with talent and the Lord and that the good work they do is done in his name.

As always the Mass is celebrated on the first Sunday in September. And this will not change in 2016 when the Guild will celebrate their 60th birthday!

Fr Geoff Bottoms was the main celebrant this year and artistes played their part by undertaking the readings and bidding prayers. After Mass everyone enjoyed a splendid buffet organised by Anne Davies and were entertained by a variety of singers and comic interludes.

Catholic Stage Guild North is involved in many areas of fund raising for charitable causes in both a collective and individual way. Many of the supporters of the Guild are using their talents to raise money or raise awareness of those in need.

Charitable giving and charitable work is always done in a discreet manner as befits those who use their talents for the Glory of the Lord.  
*Mike Gannon*



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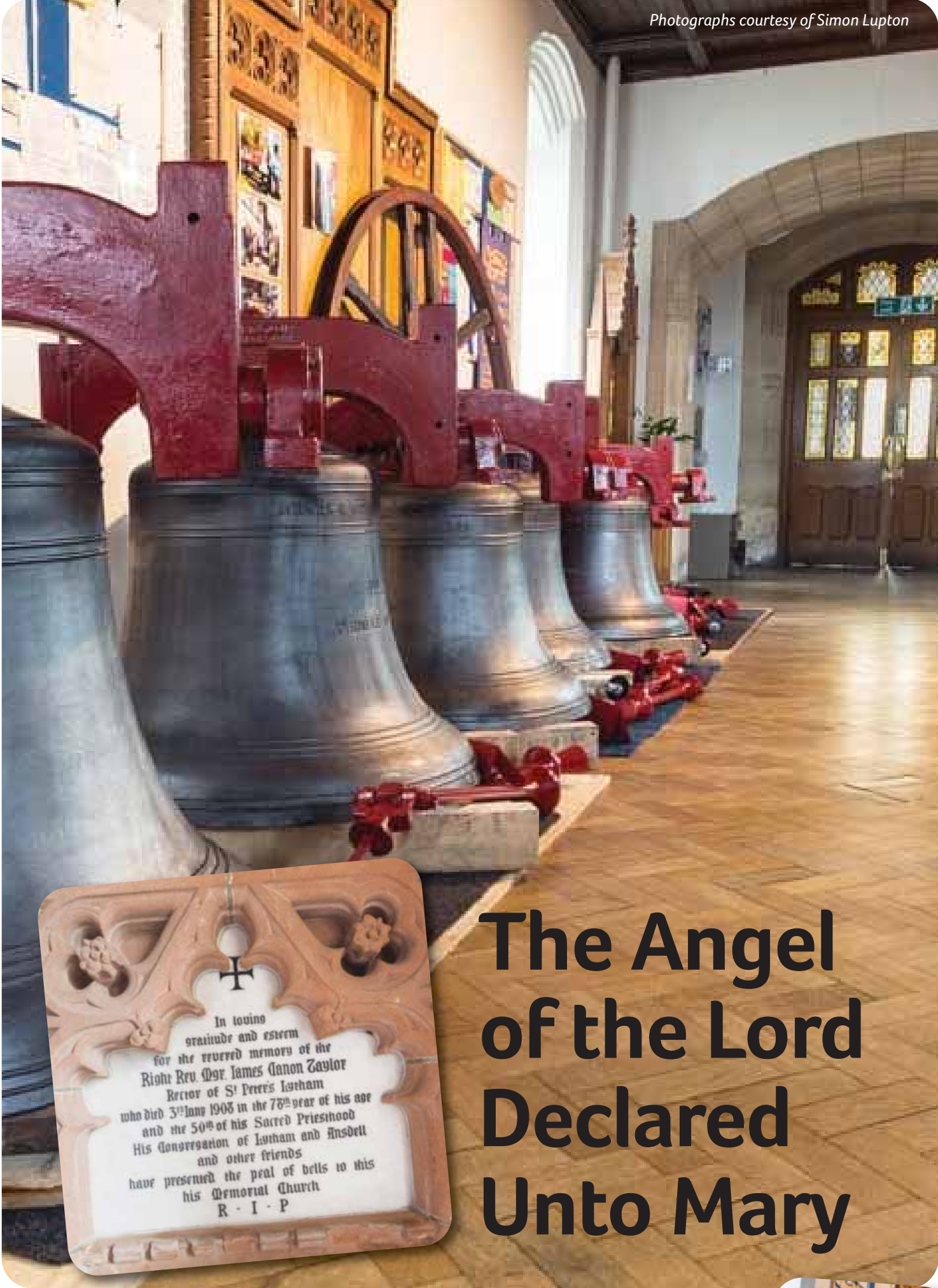
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Photographs courtesy of Simon Lupton

# The Angel of the Lord Declared Unto Mary

As part of the complete refurbishment of their peal of bells, St Joseph's Ansdell arranged for the Angelus to be chimed three times a day 8 o'clock in the morning, noon and 6 o'clock in the evening. The introduction of the Angelus is all part of the mission of the parish to evangelise, the chimes ringing out across the village hopefully causing people to stop and turn their head towards the church and even say a little prayer.

"It was quite a day when our bells returned from the foundry after being cleaned and retuned with around 200 people visiting St Joseph's to take a look. For some people it was their first visit to a Catholic church and it was amazing how many people were interested in the church as well as seeing the bells. We fielded lots of questions about the Statues and Stations of the Cross and we were also given the opportunity to explain about the Tabernacle" said Richard Jones, Tower Captain.

The peal of bells were donated by the parishioners of St Joseph's and St Peter's Lytham over 100 years ago in memory of Mgr Canon James Taylor, whose estate paid for the actual church.

**The Angelus**  
The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary  
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit  
**Hail Mary.....**

Behold the handmaid of the Lord  
Be it done to me according to your Word  
**Hail Mary.....**

And the Word was made flesh  
And dwelt among us  
**Hail Mary.....**

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God  
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ

**Let us pray:** Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection through the same Christ Our Lord. **Amen.**





# What’s your philosophy?

It is a well known dictum of Cognitive Behavioural therapists that our thoughts and beliefs affect our feelings and our behaviours. Mary Midgley in her classic “*Utopias, Dolphins and Computers*” makes the analogy between a house’s plumbing and the philosophies we hold. We all have philosophies – but most of the time, like plumbing, they are hidden from our awareness. We build them up piecemeal. We don’t usually notice our conceptual frameworks/ plumbing system until something goes wrong.

The philosophies we hold exert a powerful, but hidden influence over our lives. We pick them up from the media, our parents, our peers, and our educators. Midgley argues that you’ll either have good plumbing if you bought a house which already had good plumbing (*ie one was lovingly brought up, and well catechised and taught*); or because your house’s plumbing system sprung leaks and had to undergo a complete overhaul.

It is important to make our philosophies conscious: we all have one. As Mary Midgley argues, ‘*The alternative to getting a proper philosophy is not avoiding philosophy altogether, which cannot be done, but continuing to use a bad one*’.

What are some of the philosophies that dominate our age? A powerful one is relativism. This is the view that there is no objective truth, so your version of ‘truth’ is as valid as mine: ‘*Whatever floats your boat*’. By this way of thinking one might decide to integrate Catholicism and Buddhism, because it suits your personality. This overlooks the simple law of non-contradiction (*a fundamental philosophical principle, and the underpinning of good common sense*) by which it is simply not possible for Jesus to be simultaneously just another enlightened sage, and the Son of God. Outside the realm of faith people would accept this: my car cannot be both a Volvo and a Fiat. ‘*Many paths up the same mountain*,’ some say. Yes, but will they all take you to the top? This is not to say that there are not truths in others faith. There are. We can learn from other traditions (*about ethics, self-discipline, modesty, concentration, awareness, almsgiving, to mention just a few subjects*) and their portion of truth may have got them further than us. But there are

irreconcilables: You cannot say ‘*Christ was a prophet who didn’t die on the Cross*’, and that ‘*Jesus was fully God, became fully human, and died and rose for our salvation*’.

Many people think that what I feel is true, is true. I feel that the book my friend has lent me is mine. It has been on my shelf a while. Yet she might quite rightly see the incongruence of my position.

Another common core belief is ‘*you only live once*’ (‘*Y.O.L.O.*’), so ‘*relax, enjoy yourself*’. Where present personal enjoyment is the guiding light behind our choices, we have the philosophical frame of hedonism. Rather, Aquinas sees the pursuit of happiness as a legitimate, natural goal but argues that happiness tends to come as unsolicited by-product of contemplating God, and loving and serving Him and others.

The Church has always held a positive attitude towards philosophy. Pope St John Paul II argues that she does not seek to ‘*canonise*’ any particular system, but sees all philosophy that leads to truth as compatible with and of service to the Faith. Truth is from the Holy Spirit who does not contradict Himself. The Church confidently teaches that the Catholic Faith is the fullness of absolute objective truth, and is wholly compatible with reason (*and therefore with good science too*). This would be sheer arrogance if we did not have Christ’s word for it (*John 16:13*).

The Roman Empire had no problem tolerating Christianity, as just one religion alongside numerous pagan religions, so long as Christians would just conform and respect the imperial cult. What the Romans abhorred was the Christians’ seemingly conceited assertion to be the one true faith. The prophets Hosea and Amos did not accuse the Israelites of abandoning worship of the One True God, but of syncretism – their mixing Judaism with the worship of Ba’al. There is nothing new under the sun. Today’s equivalent might be renting out the Church Hall for yoga classes, or receiving reiki for your back trouble. Are we today being presented with some very old challenges, in subtler guises?

Katherine Daniels

## PUZZLE – Can you find the names for the following in the wordsearch. You may need ‘Google’ as it is quite difficult!

H M S I L A I R E T A M S R  
I E C L E C T I C I S M M E  
S M D I S M A N T R I A S L  
T A D O V C S O E S A Y I A  
O R A T N I E I C H L E E T  
R X S L E I C P E K G R D I  
I S E S L I S Y T H T I I V  
C P L A T O S M E I T A F I  
I A Q U I N A S T R C N X S  
S L S L A I R E T A K I A M  
M A E L T O T S I R A S S P  
P R A G M A T I S M N M P M  
A R A S C I E N T I S M I N  
B C Y X M S I V I T I S O P

1. The belief of some Protestants and Catholics in the early C19th which holds that faith is beyond reason. (*Condemned by Bl. Pius IX and Vatican I*).
2. Using individual ideas drawn from different philosophies, without concern for their internal coherence, how they fit in a system or their historical context, making it hard to identify errors from bits of truth (*see Fides et Ratio 86*).
3. Sees only what science teaches as true and meaningful. Religion, ethics and art are so much nonsense. Tends to the view that, thanks to technology, man can take complete charge of his destiny.

4. The view that the truth of a philosophy is determined by its appropriateness to a particular time and historical purpose. Questions the existence of universal enduring truths which transcend context.
5. Value calibrated by the pleasures of the moment, and avoiding pain – mental or physical.
6. An approach which dismisses all forms of knowledge except what can be known by the positive sciences. It sees religion, metaphysics, and aesthetics as pure fantasy. It rejects the belief in God, and denies any objective morality.
7. A Greek philosopher, taught by Plato, who believed in objective knowledge and realistic metaphysics, and body-soul unity.
8. Metaphysical position that all that exists is material.
9. The view that nothing can be known, and nothing is true.
10. The position that any view regarding truth or morals is equally valid. Yet this school sees as false (*and intolerant*) those who seek to deny it’s position.
11. Mistaking God’s immanence for His being part of the created world e.g. present in trees and streams.
12. Greek philosopher who believed reality existed in the Realm of Forms. Taught by Socrates.
13. Dominican theologian known as the ‘*Angelic Doctor*’, author of the *Summa Theologica*.
14. Social and political philosopher whose ideas were taken up by Lenin in Russia.
15. A philosophical movement that asserts that a proposition is true if it works satisfactorily. The meaning of a proposition is to be assessed according to the practical consequences it would entail. Unpractical ideas are to be rejected.


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Saturdays: 10.30 am, Low Mass Sundays: 10.30 am, Sung Mass  
Tuesday 8th December at 7.00 pm  
Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
St Walburge, Preston  
Sunday 13th December at 3.00 pm  
Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)  
St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster  
Thursday 24th December at 10.30 pm  
Vigil of the Nativity  
St Walburge, Preston  
Friday 25th December at 10.30 am  
Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
St Walburge, Preston  
Friday 1st January at 10.30 am  
Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord  
St Walburge, Preston  
Wednesday 6th January  
Epiphany of the Lord  
Our Lady & St Joseph, Carlisle at 7.00 pm  
St Walburge, Preston at 7.00 pm  
Sunday 10th January at 3.00 pm  
Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph  
St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster  
Monday 25th January at 7.30 pm  
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## Maryport pupils raise £1,300 for CAFOD's Harvest appeal



**M**aryport school children have raised £1,365 to help young people affected by violence and conflict over 5,000 miles away.

Pupils from Our Lady and St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School held a non-uniform day as well as bake sales, sponsored runs, and a 'bad hair day' during October to fundraise for CAFOD's Harvest appeal. The annual schools' campaign is this year focused on supporting children impacted by crime and gang violence in El Salvador.

Our Lady and St. Patrick's Headteacher Jacqueline Hampson said:

*"We are delighted that we have raised such a huge amount of money for CAFOD's work. Our pupils have been learning about how so many children their age in El Salvador can't do things that they take for granted because of the fighting that goes on in their communities and how CAFOD is providing spaces where young people can enjoy their childhood in peace."*

*"We had a great time raising the money. It's inspiring to think that our pupils' generosity*

*can help to provide spaces for children to learn or play with their friends in a safe environment."*

CAFOD works with local partners in the Latin American country to reduce conflict and provide safe spaces where children are free to learn and play. More than 75,000 people were killed in a civil war in El Salvador in the 1980s and early 1990s, and violence and crime from gangs continues to affect communities.

Patrick Gardner, CAFOD coordinator in Cumbria, said:

*"Every child has the right to live without fear. Growing up in a peaceful environment is more than just growing up away from conflict – it's about children having safe spaces to go to school, make friends, and achieve their full potential."*

*"We would like to say a huge thanks to all the pupils for their generosity and for helping to bring about a bit more peace in the world."*

More info about CAFOD's Harvest appeal can be found at [cafod.org.uk/harvest](http://cafod.org.uk/harvest)

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## Workington Scouts Go for Gold

**O**ur Lady's & St Michaels, Workington hosted a Mass at which Explorer Scouts from local parishes received their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards from Canon Paul Swarbrick.

The award was gained after 3 years work completing sections on voluntary work, a physical & skill based section, expeditions and presentations. Their Gold expedition included walking the entire length of Hadrian's Wall.

Two of the scouts attended the Queens Scout Presentation at Windsor Castle

earlier in the year and two are hoping to attend next year. The Explorers have taken part in reading on Parade Sunday's and have led the Remembrance Day service over the last 3 years.

Additionally each year the Scout group in the parish help out with a Christmas card delivery service. A collection box for the cards is placed at the back of our churches during Advent. The Beavers, Cubs, Scouts & Explorers then deliver the cards. This benefits the elderly parishioners and people who have mobility problems as the cost of postage is quite high.

*Paul Glaister*

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# Don't Drop Jesus!

by Julia Beacroft



**A**s we approach another Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot help but smile as I remember the story that my elder daughter told me just over a year ago. She works as an English teacher in a secondary school and teaches pupils from age eleven through to age eighteen, of all mixed abilities.

Last year she was given the task of organising a group of eleven year olds to perform the traditional nativity play. Despite numerous 'rehearsals' however, she found it quite an uphill struggle to lick into shape a convincing Mary and Joseph, to say nothing of the shepherds and Magi. The infant Jesus, of course, was portrayed by the usual baby doll – as life-sized and life-like as possible.

## Howls of Laughter

Eventually the day of the great performance arrived and my daughter felt quietly confident. All went well until 'Mary' fluffed her lines and 'Joseph' who was currently holding 'baby Jesus' became distracted by his 'wife's' mistake. Flapping his hands around in agitation, he let go of the doll which fell to the floor with a resounding crash. This was followed by

a stunned silence and then howls of laughter from actors and audience alike!

In our adult lives, we too, can be equally guilty of 'dropping' Jesus. There may be those occasions when we forget or fail to find the time to pray.

Furthermore, we often neglect our personal relationship with the Lord in favour of the busyness of our everyday lives. We can often be hardly aware of it. That is, until we are faced with a disaster and our own world crashes around us and we rapidly turn to prayer.

## For Our Sake

This Christmas, as we celebrate the Word which became flesh for our sake, let us try to remember that Jesus is truly always with us. So there's no need to pick him up or put him down as we see fit. And he will never, ever 'drop' us.

Julia Beacroft is a catechist and pastoral volunteer who lives in Torquay. Her first book 'Sanctifying the Spirit' will be published and available to buy next year.

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# Witness to Life

**T**he Lune Valley branch of SPUC would like to say a public thank you to those that made their way to Carnforth for the annual Pro-Life Chain.

For the last three years the aim has been to double the number of witnesses to the sanctity of human life on the anniversary of the implementation of the Abortion Bill. This year for the first time we saw this happen. We jumped from just three people to seven.

There is a further opportunity to take the Gospel to the heart of the city – join us to sing Carols for the Unborn (including the as yet unborn baby Jesus!) on the 19th December, meeting in the Market Square, Lancaster City Centre at 2.30pm.

Ruth Smith  
Chairman SPUC Lune Valley Branch

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# A Living Rosary



**F**or the Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Filipino Community, October is traditionally the month for a “*Rosary Novena*”. A Marian devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary. In years past this has meant visiting a different family's home each evening for nine evenings carrying a Statue of “*Mama Mary*” from house to house. The host family will have prepared a table, flowers and candles ready to receive the Statue. The Community then gather and pray the Rosary together, led by the host family. Food which is brought by individuals is then shared and eaten.

This year the community, supported by Fr John Winstanley of Christ the King and St Kentigern's and Fr Jason Dy SJ, a Filipino priest completing a postgraduate degree at Liverpool Hope University, came together in St Kentigern's for nine evenings to pray the Rosary together. On one evening this coincided with Holy Hour and Benediction, making it extra special.

On this occasion the Living Rosary was created by forming a circle on the Sanctuary and each individual represented a bead. The Rosary was led from the pulpit and as each individual

prayed their part of the Living Rosary a candle held in their hand was lit until all five decades were prayed and all candles lit. Even, the little children formed a decade of the Living Rosary. The Rosary concluded with a robust rendition of “*Immaculate Mary*”.


A Mass in Tagalog, a language of the Philippines, was then celebrated by Fr Jason. All of the community then gathered in the Church Hall for traditional Filipino food, entertainment and dancing.

## Ave Maria!

The culmination of the Novena was a “*Living Rosary*”.

The Living Rosary Association was founded on December 8th, 1826 by Venerable Pauline Marie Jaricot in Lyon, France. The association was formally approved by the Catholic Church through a Canonical letter in February, 1827. The aims of the Living Rosary were to bring the people of France to a prayerful way of life and distribute Catholic literature and devotional articles. There are Living Rosary Associations around the world and in the Philippines it is known as The Living Rosary Association of St. Philomena.

Angelita Smith

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## Our Lady of the Sign



**D**uring October at Hying Monastery, Sr. Mary Stella led an Icon course for beginners. The chosen icon was “*Our Lady of the Sign*” based on the prophecy of Isaiah. There were 11 participants including Irene, our novice. It was an intensive course starting on early Monday and finishing on Friday afternoon.

The writing of the icon begins with washing the board. The wood of the board symbolizes the wood of the Cross. The icon is the body of Christ. The colours symbolize different meanings. As for Our Lady, she always has three stars on her head and her shoulders. She wears a red robe which symbolizes that she is truly a mother and a blue tunic which emphasizes her virginity.

The icons were later blessed at Mass by resident chaplain Fr. Michael McKenna MHM.

Sr. Michaela Toulmin



# Calendar of Events

by Julia Beacroft



But mum, can't I open them all then?  
'Cos it's my birthday...

**W**HEN MY CHILDREN were young, I once saw how to make your own chocolate Advent calendar on a television programme. Being keen on arts and crafts, this seemed to be an ideal task for me. So, without further ado I began on the project.

Firstly, you had to draw your picture on thick cardboard, examples of this being a snowman, Santa Claus, star or bell. You had to collect twenty-five plastic milk bottles and cut off the screw tops and the surrounding piece of plastic. You then had to attach these to the picture, suitably spaced and cover the area with cotton wool, spraying it the appropriate colour or leaving it white for the snowman. Finally, when you've completed the picture's details, numbered the lids and filled each little plastic screw off 'window' with a chocolate or sweet,

Hey Presto! your Advent calendar is completed!

## JEWEL IN THE CROWN

As I have four children, this of course meant four calendars and they took up a huge amount of room in the home. They were big and heavy when finished, as well. In retrospect, it appeared to have been a

lot of effort for a less than average result.

Each Advent, we, as Christians, put in our own effort as we await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We try to use this time productively to consider our own spirituality, giving thanks for all we have received and praising God.

## ENERGY AND TALENTS

We also try to help others as part of our pre-Christmas 'giving'. Advent is a special time when we can become even closer to God. In a busy world, where Advent can so easily be overlooked, it is truly a jewel in the crown of our Christian year.

Therefore, if you're looking for a good spiritual 'result' this Advent, my advice would be to pay less attention to everyday activities and use your energy and talents instead for the glory of God. And, unless you're really keen, never attempt to make Advent calendars for your children!

Julia Beacroft is a catechist and pastoral volunteer who lives in Torquay. Her first book 'Sanctifying the Spirit' will be published and available to buy next year.

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### NOVENA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

30th November – 7th December

6 pm (except Sat 5th at 5 pm)

Sermon in honour of Our Lady & Benediction

Monday 7th December, 6 pm

Solemn conclusion of the Novena with visit from Bishop Campbell

Tuesday 8th December

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

7 pm, Sung Mass and Consecration to Our Lady

### CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Friday 18th December, 7.30 pm

Christmas Concert: Guardian Concert Band & Preston Concert Band

Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve

9.30 pm Confessions

10 pm, Christmas Carols

10.30 pm, High Mass

Friday 25th December Christmas Day

10.30 am, Low Mass with hymns

Sunday 27th December, 10.30 am

Blessing of Wine in honour of St. John after Mass

### NEW YEAR'S

New Year's Eve Thursday 31st December, 11.45 pm

Te Deum and Benediction in thanksgiving for the year, followed by reception

New Year's Day Friday 1st January

Holy Mass at 10.30 am



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## Lancaster Diocese *Christmas Mass Times*

### Ansdel

St Joseph

Christmas Eve  
11.30pm Carols  
12.00 Midnight Mass  
Christmas Day  
10.00am Family Mass  
New Year's Day  
12:00 Noon Mass

### Whitby

St Hilda's

Christmas Eve  
5.30pm Carols  
6.00pm Vigil Mass

Christmas Day  
9.00am Mass, English Martyrs, Sleights  
10.30am Mass, St Hilda's

### Whitehaven

St Begh

Christmas Eve  
5.30pm Carol singing  
6.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass  
8.30pm Carol Singing  
9.00pm Midnight Mass.

Christmas Day  
8.00am Mass at Quay St  
10.00am Family Mass

Please note, no evening Mass

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### Blackpool

St Bernadette

Christmas Eve  
5.00pm Children's Christmas Mass  
7.30pm Carols followed by  
8.00pm Candlelit Sung Mass  
Christmas Day  
10.00am Mass

### Lytham

St Peter

Christmas Eve  
7.30pm Carol Service  
8.00pm Vigil Mass

Christmas Day  
10.30am Family Mass

### Preston

Our Lady & St Edward

Christmas Eve  
5.30pm Carols  
6.00pm Christmas Family Mass  
11.30 Carols and Readings  
12.00 Midnight Mass  
Christmas Day  
10.00am Mass of Christmas Day

### Preston, Goosenargh

St. Francis

Christmas Eve  
7.00pm Vigil Mass

Christmas Day  
9.30am Mass of  
Christmas Day

### Preston

St Gregory the Great

Christmas Eve  
6.30pm Family Vigil Mass  
12.00 Midnight Mass

Christmas Day  
10.00am Mass

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