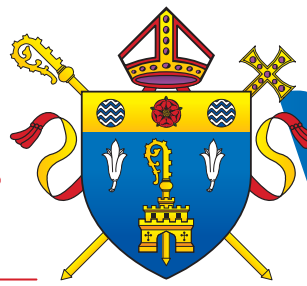


The Catholic VOICE of Lancaster



The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster
Issue 276 + February 2016

INSIDE: p08 Find out all about the Jubilee of Mercy
p17 Ministry of Acolyte



HOLY YEAR OF MERCY

Fling Open the Doors

Let Jesus Return!



Opening the Door of Mercy in Westminster Cathedral.

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EDITORIAL

It is the end of January and how many New Year resolutions have lasted the month? And what were the resolutions that were made? To lose weight; to take up a new hobby; to learn a new language or how to play a musical instrument; to curb one's drinking; to exercise more or to get a better life and work balance..... - All laudable intentions, for our physical and emotional well-being.

Meanwhile, we witness the atrocities being committed across the world in the name of religion, the persecution of peoples because of their beliefs (especially Christians), the plight of refugees, those suffering natural disasters including the extensive floods being experienced throughout the UK and in particular those affected within our Diocese of Lancaster not to mention the starving, those suffering in difficult relationships or from abuses, those suffering as a result of addictions and those denied life through abortion. The list could go on and on and on. It is described by many as a broken-world, and many get frustrated and downhearted as they look to the world for solutions.

God created us and all that is good in the world, he even sent his only Son into the world to show us how we should live but he also gave us 'free will' to accept the way of Christ or seek other paths. Jesus never promised an easy ride. Rather we remember He said "whosoever follows me needs to take up his Cross". But he did promise that those who sought the mercy of God with a truly repentant heart would be received like the prodigal son.

Our world cannot - on her own - cure her ills. But a world turning to the Creator will ultimately deliver positive changes in true justice and peace.

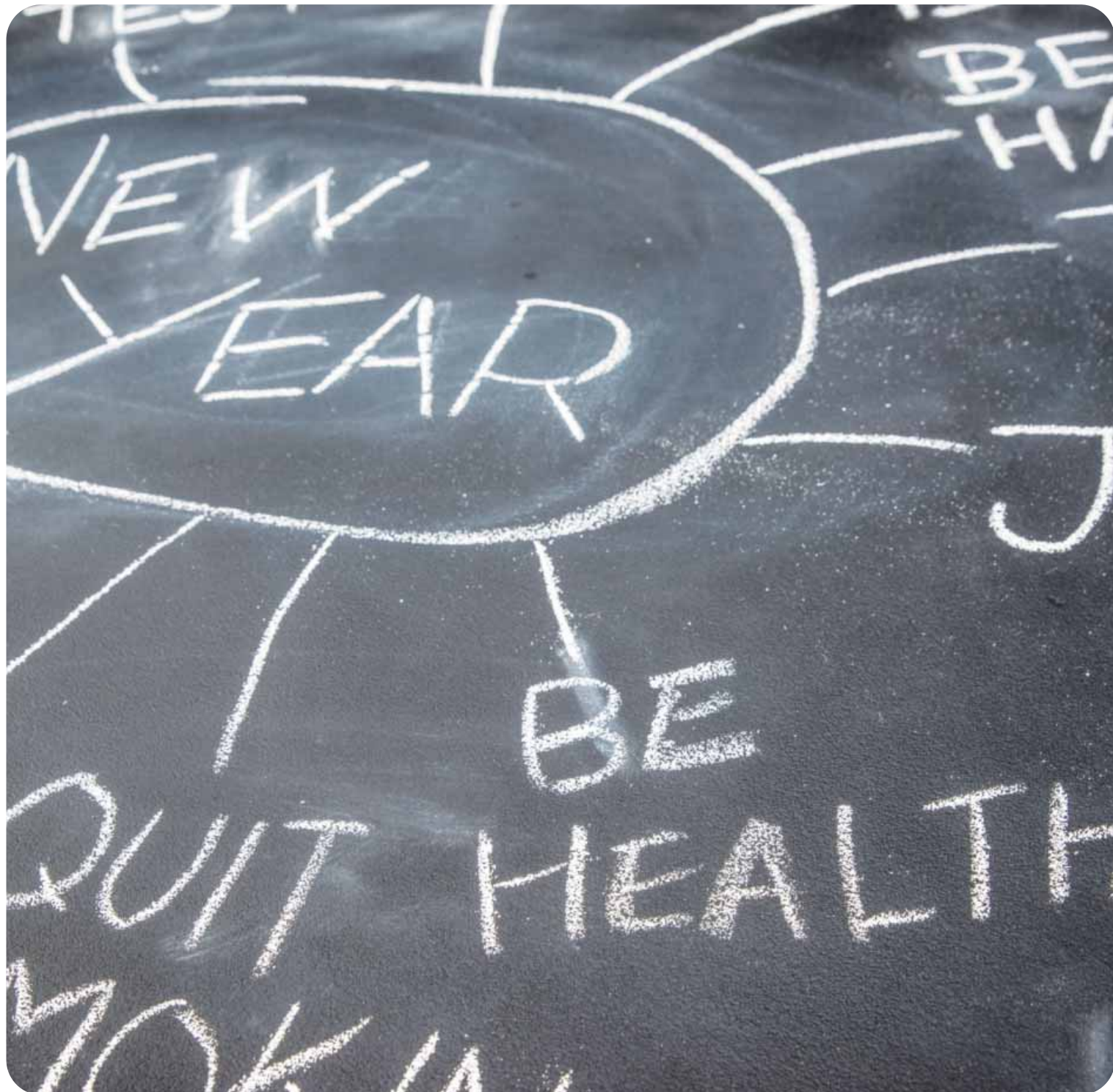
How many New Year Resolutions included to develop my spiritual life by spending more time in the presence of God in prayer, to thank Him for His abundant blessings and to seek His forgiveness. And yet such resolutions would have a much more profound effect on our lives and those around us than any amount of dieting and exercise. The good news is that God is ready there and waiting whatever the month.

In his first Angelus address on 17 March 2013, Pope Francis spoke of "Feeling mercy...this word changes everything."

Mercy, he said then, "is the best thing we can feel: it changes the world. A little mercy makes the world less cold and more just. We need to understand properly this mercy of God, this merciful Father who is so patient."

The point that the Holy Father is making is that if we want a more just world where nations live in peace we must experience the mercy of God and learn to forgive as our Father forgives us. Pope Francis explains "Dear brothers and sisters, I have thought about how the Church can make clear its mission of being a witness of mercy. "It's a journey that starts with a spiritual conversion." For this reason Pope Francis has inaugurated an Extraordinary Jubilee that has the mercy of God at its center, - a Holy Year of Mercy."

The Catholic Voice encourages readers to take advantage of this Jubilee Year of Mercy to turn to God more fervently than ever before to fully experience His mercy and love that we in turn can share with others and they in turn can share as well. This edition carries a special two page feature on the Year of Mercy on pages 8 and 9.



Charity in Action



Charity at St Benedict's Catholic High School in Whitehaven is always at the forefront of its minds. However, the school has always had a particular focus on a charity for the month of harvest in October.

This year, their focus was the "North Lakes Foodbank", which covers all of West Cumbria. Nina and Olivia, who are the 'Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Officers' on the Sixth Form Council remembered the Foodbank collection efforts from 2014 and wanted to make it even better.

Both girls said, "We knew a lot of people in

school didn't know much about the Foodbank so we planned an assembly to be delivered to each year group. We told the stories of people who had used the Foodbank, we looked at the numbers of people using them and why this was happening. We then focused on our own area in West Cumbria and the need for the Foodbank here. Then we set up a competition between all of the tutor groups to see who could bring in the most food. We gave every student a Foodbank shopping list to take home and food began coming in. We collected food from tutors and stored it. Within the first week we already had more food than we did last year. By the end of the month we hardly had any room to store any more food.

Linda, assistant manager of the Foodbank came into school to collect the food and it went to the warehouse to be sorted. We're now planning a visit to the warehouse to volunteer for a day with some others from the 6th form at the end of the month.

"We found people were really generous with their donations and the Foodbank is such a worthwhile cause."

The school collected nearly 500 items of food and are very proud of everyone's efforts, especially Nina and Olivia who organised the whole collection.

Sam French, Marketing & Publicity Officer

Over 70 parishioners from churches around the Blackpool Deanery gathered together to compete for the Deanery Quiz Trophy. This annual event began in 2004 and ensures an evening of fun for all. This year the trophy was won by St John Vianney. Congratulations to Fr Peter Sharrock and the team.

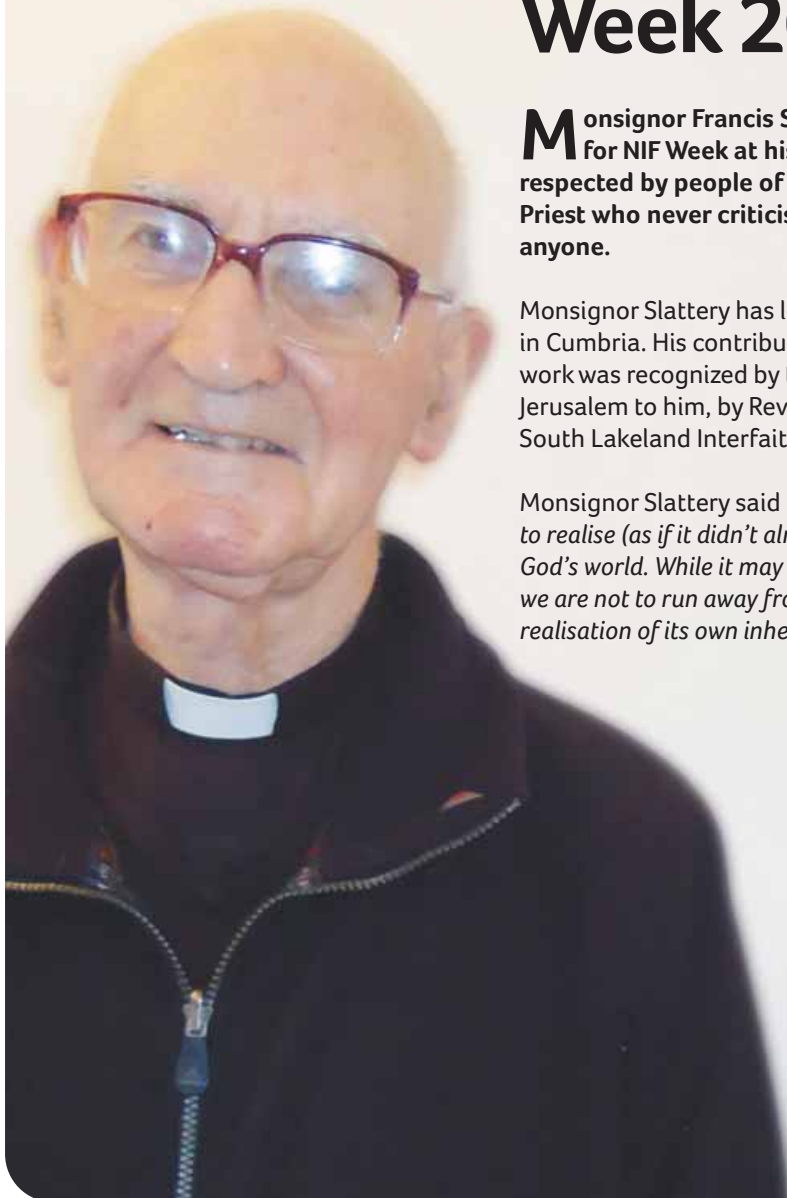


National Interfaith Week 2015

Monsignor Francis Slattery led a multifaith celebration for NIF Week at his Presbytery in November. He is widely respected by people of all faiths and none as an exemplary Priest who never criticises anyone, and is never snide about anyone.

Monsignor Slattery has long been involved in interfaith work in Cumbria. His contribution to local interfaith and multifaith work was recognized by the presentation of a framed map of Jerusalem to him, by Rev John Hetherington Secretary of SLIF South Lakeland Interfaith Forum.

Monsignor Slattery said "In the modern world religion is coming to realise (as if it didn't already know) that the world is good; it is God's world. While it may have all the trappings of superficiality, we are not to run away from it but to embrace it and bring it to a realisation of its own inherent goodness."



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Anke, 23, Castlerigg Manor - Keswick

Being a YOUNG Catholic Today

November 2011: the feast of Christ the King. I had made the decision that I wanted to be a Christian just a few months ago, inspired by people in a non-denominational church. A Catholic friend thought I was missing out and insisted I join him for Mass, just this one time, just once.

Nervously I walked into the chapel. I asked the Holy Spirit to make sure that I wouldn't be bored, to make sure I am able to pay attention. Everyone sat down. So did I. Then I noticed that they are not actually sitting down, but kneeling. Awkwardly I join in, trying to make it look as though sitting down first is just my way of kneeling. "This is my Body" - two months of lectures in Catholic theology prove to be helpful. The priest lifts up the Host and I know that this moment is special. I believe that it is special. I did not expect that I would believe it - it just happened.

April 2012. I know I no longer want to stand back and watch. I feel like I am missing out. My Catholic friends speak about Confession sometimes and they seem to appreciate it so much. They speak about the Eucharist, the rosary, the breviary, the saints. They even speak about chastity. I am impressed by their honesty and devotion. I want that. I joined the Student Cross pilgrimage, walking from London to Walsingham during Holy Week. We carry a large cross and there is something comforting about the wood pressing gently onto my shoulder. It is a constant reminder of God's grace, of God's intervention to reconcile us to Himself. Reconciliation... "How long has it been since your last confession?" I giggle. I have got some explaining to do. Baptised, first Holy Communion, confirmed - never been to confession. I suppose people who were once forced to go wanted to give us more freedom. But I want real freedom - the freedom that Christ offers. I want that joy of the Sacrament, knowing that God forgives me even if I am hardly aware of my sins. "I absolve you..."

December 2015. I have been enjoying life at Castlerigg for the past few months. Every day I get to experience that joy again. The joy of just being Catholic. It is such a blessing to be able to share that with others. It is a great blessing, also, to have endless silly and crazy moments with the team. And even more so, to be able to thank God every day for being part of a community in which people are not afraid to support one another, whether it be on the worst or the best day, reflecting the love that motivates them - God's love.

Embrace 2015 "Build my Kingdom"

On the weekend of Youth Sunday and the Feast of Christ the King the second Embrace Conference took place at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. Having missed last year's conference, I had no idea what to expect but was excited for what the day entailed. I was definitely not disappointed!

It was a fantastic day packed with laughter, singing and silent reflection. The day began with praise & worship, prayer and a speech from David Wells. I then attended a workshop with Rise Theatre Company, as I have enjoyed performances from them in the past. They ran a drama workshop on the theme of 'storytelling' and in groups we reflected on the parable of the mustard seed, producing freeze frames that represented the seed growing into something much bigger.

Throughout the day, there were several keynote speeches which focused on the theme for the conference: "Build my Kingdom". I particularly enjoyed the talk from Fr Frankie Mulgrew, who used an American football and a pair of oven gloves to demonstrate the touchdown of God's Kingdom to earth through Jesus!

Later in the day, we had time for praise & worship, then Adoration and Reconciliation - an opportunity to reflect on the wonderful day we were having. There was also a youth testimony that featured incredibly moving spoken word poetry, which is something I

would love to try writing myself. Embrace concluded with Vigil Mass and everyone gathered together to praise God for such a great day. Following Communion, dancers from Corpus Christi Catholic High School performed a beautiful dance piece based upon embracing those affected by the migrant crisis. My favourite part of the day was after Mass, when the musicians played "We are the Free", which seems to be a favourite worship song among many of us young Catholics! The joy in the Cathedral as we sang was indescribable; the atmosphere was electric, with everyone praising God at the tops of our voices. With much singing, dancing and clapping, the conference ended.

Embrace 2015 was a day filled with the most unbelievable amount of happiness and I had such an incredible time! It was also a great opportunity to catch up with many other young people who I have met through Lourdes and various other events, along with meeting many lovely new people. I am already looking forward to next year, and I can't recommend it enough!

Anna, 18, Preston



Easter Joy



Last April, young people from across the diocese gathered at Castlerigg to celebrate this great feast day.

Jenny writes, 'Easter means a journey of sadness through to the joyous celebration of Jesus' Resurrection. I experienced this personally. On this retreat I re-discovered my happiness as for the first time in a long time, due to the excellent advice from the priest I am feeling cleansed from sin, blessed and the happiest I have been for a while. I loved making the three crosses to symbolise Jesus and the two thieves but I also loved the feeling of recollection between all of us on retreat throughout Holy Week. I met with some old friends and with some new friends and celebrated the rising of Jesus once again with my Catholic family whom I love more than any. I loved how the weather reflected the mood of each day and how we gathered together with members of Keswick parish for the Good Friday Service and Holy Saturday Vigil. Thank you to all the team and everyone on retreat for making me an overall happier person!'

The 2016 Easter retreat will run from 24-27 March – all young people aged year 9+ would be very welcome. The cost for the weekend is £70 – this includes all food, accommodation and activities. Bookings can be made via the website at www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/yatm-events//easter-weekend For any further information please call: 01768772711

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- Include your full name and address
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- The editor reserves the right to:
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 - publish a response if deemed appropriate

Dear Editor,
 You devoted the front page of the **Catholic Voice** (November 2015 edition) to the servicemen from St Gregory's Parish, who lost their lives during the two World Wars. There was an appeal for photographs and information of any of those whose names are inscribed on the base of the Memorial Chalice.

The purpose of writing is to thank sincerely Martin Gee, who then collated all the information received and produced individual folders for each person named. He organised a beautiful display of the Chalice and the folders, which many people were able to view throughout the Remembrance weekend. During the Masses, celebrated by Fr Dakin, the Last Post was sounded, followed by a Roll Call of the Dead, which was all very moving.

In conclusion it was a very memorable event for which Martin Gee and all involved deserve sincere thanks. Thanks also to the Catholic Voice for highlighting the appeal.

On a personal note we, as a family, found it a very fitting tribute to our uncle Gerald Tipping, who served with Bomber Command and was killed during the raid on Stuttgart on the 25th July 1944, aged 27. He is buried in a small Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at St Desir, close to Lisieux, the birthplace of St Theresa.

Yours sincerely,
Theresa Wilson, Penwortham, Preston

Workshop Series ~ "Grace Builds Upon Nature:" Principles and Practicals for THE YEAR OF MERCY in our Parishes

The Year of Mercy offers us the opportunity to explore the wonder and challenge of our human nature, especially in regard to our families and fellow parishoners, alongside the work of grace. Pope Francis calls us during this Year of Mercy to prayerfully focus on three main aspects: recognising God's mercy, receiving God's mercy, and becoming more merciful ourselves.

This series of talks by Sr Mary Julian Ekman, RSM will be followed by a time for discussion, questions, and reflection. All are welcome to attend. The talks are free of charge (donations are welcome and go towards the work of the Office for the New Evangelisation).

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven:" Practicing Poverty of Spirit in our parishes?

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." How do we address the mystery of suffering in our parishes?

"Blessed are the merciful:" Why We Need the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.



"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth:" Meekness, Mercy, and Anger—a Paradox?

"Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God:" Taking Another Look at the Moral Virtues.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied:" What is the Relationship Between Mercy and Justice?

Image: Emmanuel Torres, The Prodigal Son



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 New Evangelisation in the Diocese of Lancaster

"Grace Builds Upon Nature:" Principles and Practicals for THE YEAR OF MERCY in our Parishes

JANUARY: "Blessed are the Merciful:" Why We Need the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Discussion: The Year of Mercy in our Parishes.

Lancaster – Tuesday, 12th January, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre
 Carlisle – Tuesday, 19th January, 2016, 7:00pm – St Margaret Mary Parish Centre
 Preston – Tuesday, 26th January, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Edward's Parish Centre

FEBRUARY: "Blessed are the Poor in Spirit for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven:" What is Poverty of Spirit? Discussion: How Do We Practice Poverty of Spirit and Stewardship in our Parishes?

Lancaster – Tuesday, 9th February, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre
 Carlisle – Tuesday, 16th February, 2016, 7:00pm – St Margaret Mary Parish Centre
 Preston – Tuesday, 23rd February, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Edward's Parish

MARCH: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted:" How Do We Address the Mystery of Suffering? Discussion: What Are Forms of Bereavement in our Parish & How Can We Help?

Lancaster – Tuesday, 8th March, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre
 Carlisle – Tuesday, 15th March, 2016, 7:00pm – St Margaret Mary Parish Centre
 Preston – Tuesday, 22nd March, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Edward's Parish Centre

APRIL: "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth:" Meekness, Mercy, and Anger—a Paradox? Discussion: Towards a More Merciful Parish – Practicing Meekness through Forgiveness.

Lancaster – Tuesday, 5th April, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre
 Carlisle – Tuesday, 12th April, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Joseph Parish Hall
 Preston – Tuesday, 19th April, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Edward's Parish Centre

MAY: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied:" Exploring the Relationship Between Mercy and Justice. Discussion: How Do We Exercise Justice and Charity Within our Parishes?

Lancaster – Tuesday, 3rd May, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre
 Carlisle – Tuesday, 10th May, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Joseph Parish Hall
 Preston – Tuesday, 17th May, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Edward's Parish Centre

JUNE: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God:" Taking Another Look at the Moral Virtues. Discussion: How Do We Cultivate the Moral Virtues in our Parish?

Lancaster – Tuesday, 7th June, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre
 Carlisle – Tuesday, 14th June, 2016, 7:00pm – St Margaret Mary Parish Centre
 Preston – Tuesday, 21st June, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Edward's Parish Centre

JULY: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called Sons of God." Peacemaker vs Doormat – Knowing the Difference. Discussion: How Can We Become Peacemakers?

Carlisle – Tuesday, 12th July, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Joseph Parish Hall
 Lancaster – Tuesday, 19th July, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre

SEPTEMBER: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven:" Exploring the Relationship Between Mercy and Justice. Discussion: What is the Role of Parish Pastoral Councils?

Lancaster – Tuesday, 6th September, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre
 Carlisle – Tuesday, 13th September, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Joseph Parish Hall
 Preston – Tuesday, 20th September, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Edward's Parish Centre

OCTOBER: "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account:" The Spirituality of Martyrdom. Discussion: How Do We Cultivate the Sacrament of Confirmation in our Parishes?

Lancaster – Tuesday, 11th October, 2016, 7:00pm – Education Centre
 Carlisle – Tuesday, 18th October, 2016, 7:00pm – St Margaret Mary Parish Centre
 Preston – Tuesday, 25th October, 2016, 7:00pm – Our Lady & St Edward's Parish Centre



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Churches gather to signal the beginning of Advent

St Mary's Church at Kells hosted an **Advent Service on Sunday 29th November** for all its neighbouring Churches. On a foul evening, a gathering of some 140 people came together, for what has become a regular feature of the annual programme of the 'Kells Joint Churches Project'.

The clear message of the service was that there is a great deal more to preparing for Christmas than indulging in the madness of Black Friday and, indeed there is a great deal more to the Christmas event than just celebrating the birth of a child.

The keen participation of pupils from Year 9 students from St Benedict's Catholic High School, the parish's own St Mary's Catholic Primary School and 'St Mary's Little Lambs' Sunday morning group, brought the service alive in dance, in song and in decorating the Jesse Tree a traditional depiction of the genealogy of Jesus.


Clergy and parishioners from all the Churches involved led the readings and prayers.


The service was rounded off by an extended reflection based around an Advent Prayer written by the late Fr Henri Nouwen.





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What you need to know about the Jubilee of Mercy

On 8th December 2015 Pope Francis opened the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, which lasts until November 20th (the Feast of Christ the King) this year.

It's a Holy Year, also known as a Jubilee Year, when the Church emphasises some characteristic of the Christian faith, and invites people to grow closer to God and each other.

An Ordinary Jubilee occurs every 25 years; the last one was the Great Jubilee of 2000. But Popes can break the cycle, and declare an 'extraordinary' Jubilee whenever they wish. Pope Francis has declared this extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, because he reckons mercy needs re-emphasising or recovering. "Perhaps we have long since forgotten how to show and live the way of mercy", he writes in *Misericordiae Vultus*.

Miseri what?

Misericordiae Vultus is the name of the Bull — like an edict — which Pope Francis used to announce the Jubilee back in April. The title means 'The Face of Mercy', which is, of course God's face. The Pope says there that "the Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love". He's saying unless people recognise in the Church God's merciful love, then they won't recognise the Church as God's body on earth. Hence the motto for the Jubilee: "Merciful like the Father".

How long have these Jubilee years been going on?

The first was declared — 'indicted', to use the correct word — in 1300, so that's 715 years. Boniface VIII was keen for a wave of spirituality and forgiveness to rise up and meet the violence and hatred of the era. So he declared that pilgrims coming to Rome during that year would receive "full remission of sins". Since then, the format had become standard: announcing it with a Bull, and opening it with a Holy Door.

So this is an invention of the medieval Church?

Yes, but recovering a very old Biblical idea.

The concept of the Jubilee is very strong in the Old Testament. The word comes from the Hebrew Yovel, meaning 'ram's horn', which was blown to mark a year every 50 years dedicated wholly to God. "You will declare this fiftieth year sacred and proclaim the liberation of all the inhabitants of the land," says Yahweh in the Book of Leviticus, adding: "This will be a jubilee for you." The idea was to interrupt the cycle of day-to-day living in order to reconnect humanity with its Creator.

There's a strong link between the concept of Sabbath every seven years, and jubilee every 50th: whatever the land produced was shared among the neediest, and debts were forgiven. There was also an ecological element: "For the land belongs to me" (Leviticus 25:23). Human beings were not to continue exploiting the land for their own benefit; there was a divine order that must be respected. At the same time, the Hebrew Jubilees looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, emphasising the innate equality of all people and their hope of liberation.

Then there's the prophecy in Isaiah, fulfilled in Jesus, when God announces that he will send a Messiah full of mercy, a Messiah who would say: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me... he has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the wounds of broken hearts, to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to prisoners, and to announce a year of mercy of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:1-3).

Wait, did you say 'ecology'? A link there with *Laudato Si'*?

Well spotted. Pope Francis's great encyclical on care of the earth is precisely all about that — recovering a sense of the planet as God's gift to be nurtured, rather than an object to be plundered.

What's the Holy Door about? Why a door?

The Holy Door of the Basilica is the pilgrim's destination. The Church is a sign of the House of God, and Jesus Christ is the great Door that opens humanity to the love of the Father.



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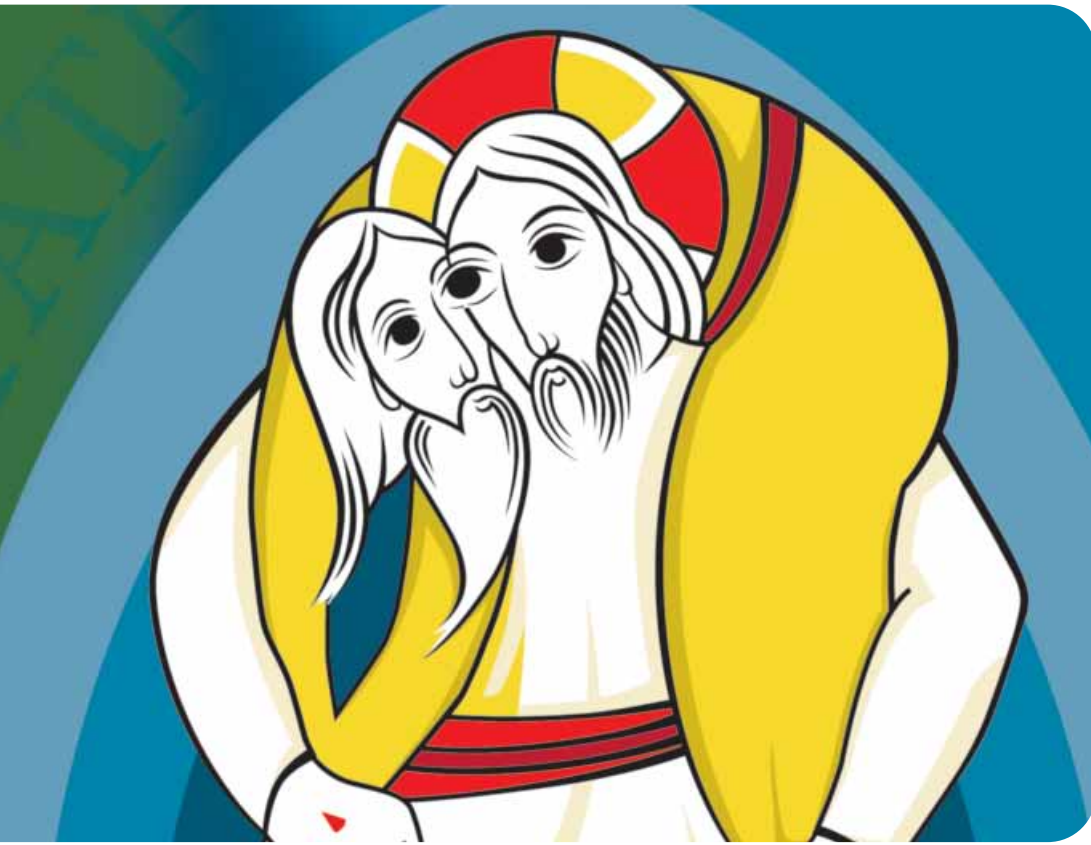
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email: lynne@scjm.org



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



The Holy Door of St Peter's used to get bricked up at the end of each Jubilee Year. Since 1974, when cement fell too close to Pope Paul VI, the door is simply opened.

Holy Doors have been opened in Cathedrals throughout the world, including in Lancaster.

You can see the power of the symbol. On 18th November Francis dedicated his weekly audience to the symbolism of what he called "the door of God's mercy, a door ever open to all who knock and desire to meet Jesus." He said doors must protect, but not repudiate, and that it was necessary to knock, "as hospitality shines in the freedom of welcome, and darkens in the arrogance of invasion". Then he spoke of how important it was to open the door frequently "to see if there is anyone waiting outside, who perhaps does not have the courage or even the strength to knock."

So what's actually going to happen?

Many pilgrims will be visiting Rome, where there will be additional facilities to welcome the anticipated influx of visitors. On a Friday of every month throughout the year Pope Francis will be making some gesture or visit, focussing on what the Church traditionally calls "works of mercy" drawn from Matthew 25: 34-36. (There are seven in all). "God, in his wisdom, sent us, in rich Europe, the hungry to be fed, the thirsty to slake their thirst, the stranger to be welcomed, and the naked to be clothed".

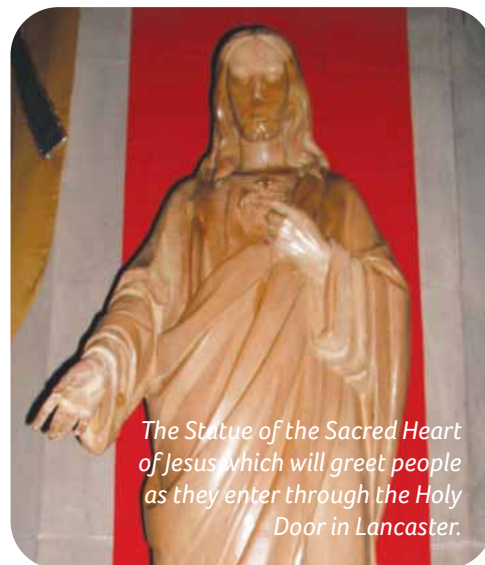
What about next year?

Some 800 priests on Ash Wednesday next year will receive from Pope Francis special faculties to be preachers and confessors of mercy, including receiving the faculty to forgive abortions (technically reserved to the Vatican or bishops, who can grant priests a standing permission). This underlines another key point about mercy, which is that it is unlocked by repentance. So expect plenty of new emphasis on the Sacrament of Confession, "the crucial meeting-place for experiencing what Pope Francis calls the caress of God's mercy," as Cardinal Nichols

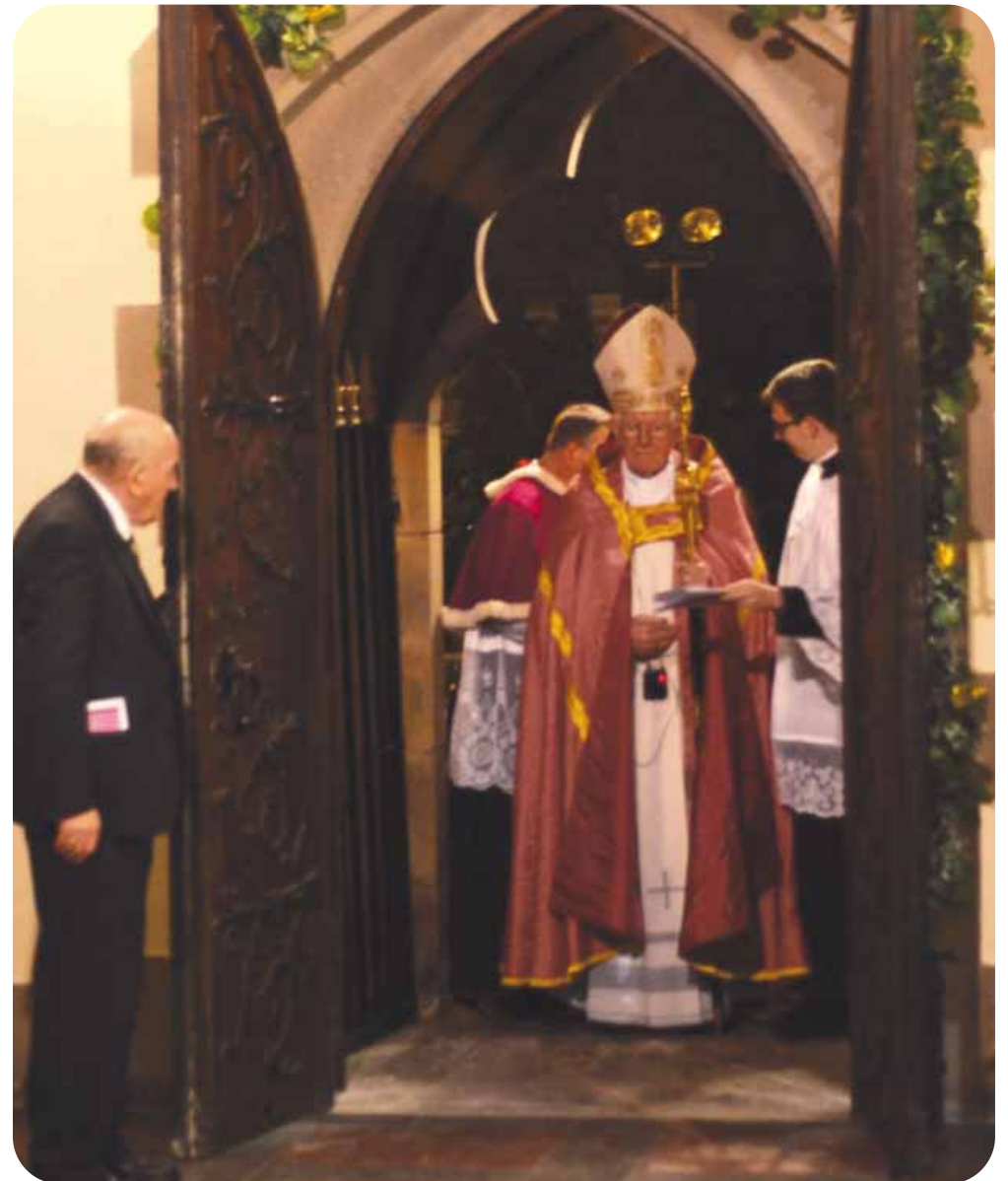
recently put it. World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland, in July, will be dedicated to the theme. Pope Francis's message to young people about how to prepare, spiritually, for WYD16 is worth a read. "I would suggest that for the first seven months of 2016 you choose a corporal and a spiritual work of mercy to practice each month", he urges. In *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis recalls John XXIII's words opening the 2nd Vatican Council in 1962: "Now the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up arms of severity ... The Catholic Church, as she holds high the torch of Catholic truth at this Ecumenical Council, wants to show herself a loving mother to all; patient, kind, moved by compassion and goodness toward her separated children." That's the Church Pope Francis wants to see.

Austen Ivereigh, a Director of Catholic Voices, and author of The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope (Henry Holt and Co., 2014).

Editor's note: Lancaster Cathedral has its own holy door, opened by Bishop Campbell on Sunday 13 December 2015. A plenary indulgence is granted to those who walk through the Holy Door, and pray for the Pope's intentions, make a Confession and receive Holy Communion, under the usual conditions.



The Statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which will greet people as they enter through the Holy Door in Lancaster.



Days of Recollection in the Diocese of Lancaster

During the Year of Mercy, the Office for the New Evangelisation will be offering Days of Recollection for those involved in the area of Adult Faith Formation. The focus of these Days is prayerful reflection and meditation on Jesus Christ as "the face of the Father's mercy" within the context of these ministries.

Venues:
 Preston and Lancaster: Sisters of Nazareth, Nazareth House, Ashton Road, Lancaster LA1 5AQ
 Carlisle: Our Lady and St Joseph, Warwick Square, Carlisle CA1 1LB
Time:
 11:00am - 4:00pm

For Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 Preston and Lancaster: Saturday, 20th February, 2016
 Carlisle: Saturday, 27th February, 2016

For Parish Pastoral Council Members
 Preston and Lancaster: Saturday, 5th March, 2016
 Carlisle: Saturday, 12th March, 2016

For RCIA Co-ordinators
 Preston & Lancaster: Saturday, 9th April, 2016
 Carlisle: Saturday, 23rd April, 2016

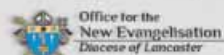
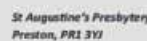

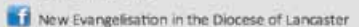
For Readers
 Preston and Lancaster: Saturday, 11th June, 2016
 Carlisle: Saturday, 3rd September, 2016

For Sacristans
 Preston and Lancaster: Saturday, 17th September, 2016
 Carlisle: Saturday, 15th October, 2016

For Parish Finance Council Members
 Preston and Lancaster: Saturday, 22nd October, 2016
 Carlisle: Saturday, 29th October, 2016

These Days are offered free of charge, although donations are always appreciated to further the work of Adult Faith Formation. **Booking, however, is essential** as there is a limit to the number of places available. **Please bring a packed lunch.** Tea and coffee will be available.

To book, please email: sistermaryjulian@gmail.com at least ten days in advance. Detailed schedules for the individual days will be sent to all parish priests, or please check the Office for the New Evangelisation website for details.



LANCASTER DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2015



The Joy of Mission!

After much organisation and preparation throughout the year the Diocese of Lancaster Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes was upon us. Led by Bishop Campbell we experienced a holy and spiritually uplifting pilgrimage. Grateful thanks goes to all who contributed to making this years pilgrimage such a wonderful success.

The week always flies by so very quickly, last year was no exception. We said farewell to friends both old and new..... until 2016.

Let's hear from some of those who made the pilgrimage last year:

The Grotto is often described as a place where heaven and earth connect in some way, it most certainly felt that way for me as we celebrated Mass there together.
Sarah Benson (Carer)

When our pilgrimage visited the Baths a group of musicians were playing deeply spiritual music. It was quiet and tranquil in the warm sun. Some pilgrims waiting for the Baths on the benches were moved to tears.
Fr. Philip. Smith (Pilgrimage Director)

The Lancaster Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in July 2015 was a great success and I feel privileged to have been able to attend. It was lovely to see everyone united in prayer and socialising.
Margaret Wright (Pilgrim)

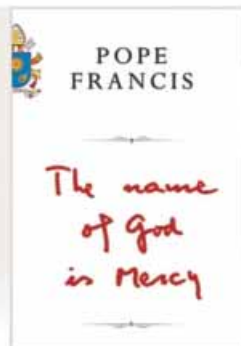
Going on pilgrimage to Lourdes has helped me with the challenges I have and face in everyday life. A profound moment for me in Lourdes was the Holy Hour in the Upper Basilica.
Grace (Youth)

I am overwhelmed with the Medical Team, Brancardier and youth who have shown outstanding care, devotion, goodness and humanity. At the Grotto, all the painful times in our lives; sickness, grief, separation, sadness can enter into our consciousness, but they can become a source of joy, peace and hope.
Sr. Norbett (Pilgrim)

What about Lourdes 2016?
The year before us is a special year because Pope Francis has proclaimed a 'Jubilee Year of Mercy' to which he invites everyone to

- Saturday:** The official start of our pilgrimage commenced with a splendid Welcome Mass in the Rosary Basilica, the church built specifically at the request of our merciful Queen.
- Sunday:** The International Mass, a celebration for all nations on pilgrimage, was a wonderful experience and was followed in the afternoon by our Service of Reconciliation in the Underground Basilica.
- Monday:** We celebrated the Mass of Anointing followed by Passage through the Grotto for our sick pilgrims. Lancaster had the honour of leading the Blessed Sacrament Procession to the Underground Basilica.
- Tuesday:** After our daily Mass there was a planned trip to the Lac de Lourdes. This was thoroughly enjoyed by young and elderly alike. In the evening we witnessed a beautiful Holy Hour with confessions in the Upper Basilica for the able bodied and in the Hotel Mediterranee for the sick.
- Wednesday:** We celebrated Mass at the Grotto, led by Lancaster; this was a joyful and spiritually uplifting celebration. Following this the registered sick had the opportunity to attend the 'Baths'. In the evening our diocese was privileged in leading the Marian Torchlight Procession.
- Thursday:** Was soon upon us and so too was our Farewell Mass, followed by a Reception in the Hotel Mediterranee in the evening.

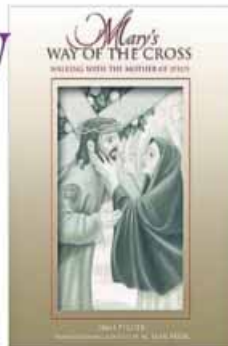
Enriching Resources for Lent...



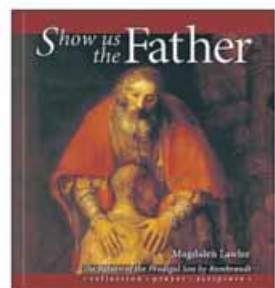
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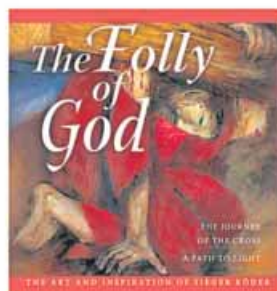


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partake. He invites everyone to make a pilgrimage this year, to physically pass through a Door of Mercy and gain a Jubilee Indulgence. By decree of the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, Lourdes will be a Jubilee Centre in 2016. And our theme of pilgrimage will be 'Merciful like the Father'.

Under the Spiritual Direction of Bishop Campbell our Pilgrimage will take place 22nd – 29th July 2016 and planning is already well under way.

Around 300 pilgrims travel by air and across land to come together as a Diocesan Family – consisting of the Bishop, priests, deacons, our sick brothers and sisters and pilgrims. They come from every part of the diocese, north, south, east and west. No other Diocesan event brings so many people together than this Devotion to Our Blessed Lady.

This year's pilgrimage will be a wonderful opportunity to cross the threshold of the Door of Mercy which will be built within the Domaine. We are invited, with Mary and Bernadette, to make the Sign of the Cross and to follow the Jubilee Itinerary. Pope Francis has said "this is the opportune moment to change our lives!"

Do you know of anyone who you think would benefit from coming to Lourdes? Please think about all those you know that may not see this message themselves, those in rest homes, the housebound, the frail, those in distress – please spread the word!

There will be a flight from Manchester for all pilgrims including the registered sick. This year, along with the coach that travels from Preston there will be a luxury coach taking able bodied pilgrims from the north of the Diocese, starting its journey in Carlisle with pick up at points en-route, with an overnight stay in northern France.

We need YOU to come along in any capacity, whether it is as a priest, a sick pilgrim, a nurse, a carer, a young person or

if you simply want to come and join the Diocese on this annual pilgrimage, contact us today.

Why not help raise funds in you parish to support a sick pilgrim. This may be their only opportunity of getting a week away knowing that they will feel safe and be looked after by an excellent team of nurses and carers. Why not organise a car boot sale, a raffle, tombola, or a barbecue event in your parish – you will be surprised how much support you get. Ask your priest to support you in bringing to others the love, peace and healing experienced by many who come to Lourdes.

*Linda Wisdom
Diocese of Lancaster Lourdes Pilgrimage*

A date for your diary: Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes will be held at Sacred Heart Parish, Blackpool on 11th February 2016 at 7pm with anointing of the sick and procession with Our Lady's statue. Refreshments will be served in the presbytery after Mass. All are most welcome.

More information can be found on the Diocesan website:
www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk/about-us/pilgrimagesshrines/our-diocesan-pilgrimage-to-lourdes/



After coming out of the Baths in Lourdes a pilgrim stopped for a drink of Holy Water and when she looked up she saw this image in the trees which, uncannily, depicts Our Lord and Saviour on the Cross.





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Consecrated Virginity and Widowhood

Living in the Gap

The vocation to consecrated virginity and widowhood is the oldest recorded vocation in the Church (1 Cor. 7). It predates the desert fathers and mothers, monasticism, and the mendicant and apostolic orders. With the development of these later forms of life, this individual vocation all but died out.

This form of 'mystical espousal to Christ' came to rebirth at Vatican II, receiving a recognised Rite of Consecration on 30 May 1970. There are now 200 consecrated virgins ("CVs") and 20 consecrated widows in the UK, and it is a vocation that keeps growing in popularity.

Consecrated Virginity

Chris Doyle, a CV from Ulverston explains how she discovered it: 'When I left university I felt a deep call to live totally and irrevocably for Christ. I thought the only way to do that was through religious life in a congregation. The complicating factor was that when I did my preliminary visit to Alfred Barrow School, I had an inward voice say "This is where I want you to work". There was a tension between the two calls to give my life irrevocably to Christ, and knowing that He wanted me to work in that school. It took years of prayer and discernment. Years later, when I was at Castlerigg, I heard a song by Joel, based on Hosea. The refrain – "Be my bride" – resonated with me. But I still didn't know how it was going to be done.

'Several years later I was at Lourdes on Retreat. For 3 days on the trot before the Blessed Sacrament the same refrain came to me "Come. Be my bride". This was a bit more direct, more insistent. "Come...". So I talked to my Spiritual Director. She said "I think you should be looking at consecrated virginity".

'I was consecrated by Bishop Brewer on 1 March 1997. The wonderful thing was that he and his successor Bishop O'Donoghue both wanted me continue to work in the school where I knew God was calling me to work – the same Community State School, which I was at for 34 years in all. It all came together. When things converge it is really the Holy Spirit'.

Diversity

Consecrated virgins and widows live in their own homes, carrying out works that match their particular talents and callings. Some live as hermit contemplatives, whereas others are involved in

education, healthcare, prison and hospital chaplaincy and parish work. They are obedient to the local Bishop, who may ask them to serve the Diocese in various ways. Since retiring, Chris has been involved in parish ministry, serves on the Board of Trustees for the Diocese and also on the Board of Education. Ursula Walker is a counsellor in Blackpool, and Joan Smeddles from Barrow is involved in parish ministry. Each woman has an individual Rule of Life agreed with her Bishop.

An individual vocation

The difference between this form of life and that of a Secular Institute is that 'it is an individual vocation of the Church, in the Church and for the Church'. There is a national gathering annually, and a 'DIY retreat' at Hynning, as well as telephone networking, and local meetings (all optional). 'Deep friendships are built that are very enriching. But the woman has to be able to live the vocation on her own, and be very balanced, discerning, resilient and spiritually mature. You've not to take yourself too seriously.'

Virginity

Chris believes that this form of life is particularly relevant in these times. Virginity in particular is a counter-cultural sign: 'Consecrated virginity is not about negation. Its essence is not saying "No" to marriage. It is consent to a specific and beautiful grace – an experience and expression of love: God's love for us and our love for God. I feel that at consecration there is a special outpouring of God's love into the soul and then it is returned to him by the virgin – it's an exchange of love. As you try to live it, discipline and self-control are needed. Consecrated virginity is sustained only by a deep and strong personal love for Christ. It's a beautiful, positive thing. You have to be virginal in the mind and the heart as well as the body. St Gertrude says "By the observance of virginity she commits herself to remain united with her Spouse, with a pure heart, a chaste body and a love that draws ever closer".

Financially independent

'I see the life as a call to live in and from Christ and to be the sign and instrument of His love in the world – especially in the gap that exists between the world and Gospel values. We live 24/7 in the world with all the same pressures and responsibilities of any lay woman. We've got to have somewhere to live. Our poverty must be balanced between providing for one's needs and living a simple, detached life, as Christ lived.



A group of Consecrated Virgins and Widows with Bishop Campbell at the consecration of Joan Smeddles as a Widow. Chris Doyle is pictured second from left; Joan Smeddles OCW is next to Bishop Campbell and Ursula Walker can be seen on the far right of the back row.



Two dimensions

'If we can only root ourselves in Christ, He can do wonderful things. To me it's not the things I do that bring me the deep joy, its being – or trying to be – one with the Lord. That's the personal dimension of the vocation. The secondary dimension is how that flows into everyday life.'

'I try to be a tabernacle for Christ and take Him with me in whatever sphere of everyday life I find myself. It could be that many people don't know that we are consecrated and yet if we live for Christ he can touch other people's lives and we may never know it. It's a less visible apostolate, but it's not secret. It's personal but it's not private.'

Admission

in the Diocese of Lancaster it takes at least 4 years in all to be admitted for possible final Consecration. Virgins or widows interested in this form of life should consult their Spiritual Director, and ultimately the Bishop. The Diocesan Bishop will then decide on a person's suitability before assigning them a Formation Director (separate from a Spiritual Director) to guide the candidate during the formation period.

Katherine Daniels

Consecrated Widowhood – A Personal Story

When Mick died I was distraught and thought that I would never be happy again. I went through the grieving process and shed many, many tears. How could God do this, take away the one person who loved me unconditionally? What sort of God was he?

At this time I had to find a new spiritual director because mine was moving away. I started to see Fr. David Elder and he helped me to see that it was OK to get angry with God and I let my anger out. God was no longer a personal God but I could find him in creation and in the Eucharist but as for a God who loved me personally.... No..... that trust had gone.

Over the next few years God lead me to Himself again. Slowly I began to learn again of God's deep love for me. I started to believe in Him again as a personal, loving God but there were many tears shed along the way for Mick. The tears slowly began to be tears of joy as I began to see that there could be a life after Mick. There had

been death but now resurrection was happening and I began to see that the love Mick had for me was God's love for me – manifest in Mick. My marriage was over but I still had/have lots of love to give. I began to know God's love for me again in the depth of my heart.

One of the ways this happened was through the Spiritual Exercises that Fr. David invited to me to do in daily life (19th Annotation). At the end of these I had a great desire to give my life in service to God. I knew I did not want to join a religious order because I was happily settled where I was with my job, friends and parish community. It just did not seem right. Fr. David invited to me look into the Order of Consecrated Widows (I had never heard of them).

These are widows who have given their lives to the service of the Church and take the vow of celibacy in the spirit of poverty and obedience to the local bishop. They live financially independent of the church.

This way of life really appealed to me because it allows me to show God's love to all those I meet. I am in the world but not "of the world". It gives me a freedom to love others – to live the Gospel in a tangible way, in the context of the everyday life they also have to live. I can witness to the great joy I have in following Jesus in a way that is accessible to all that I meet.

Consecrated Widowhood can only be understood within the context of the Sacrament of Marriage. It grows from the experience of marriage and is seen as a development of it. The person we loved is no longer here physically for us to love but he is not dead – he is alive with Jesus in heaven and interceding for us. We can still talk to them and ask for their help. The love for him is still real. This is the beauty of this vocation in that you can still remain faithful to that love. I see the vow of celibacy as a way of giving the love that I would have given to Mick to those around me.

The marriage is over and the emptiness becomes a space for God and allows a new and deeper relationship to develop. It is also one of the earliest vocations mentioned in Scripture:

"The woman who is really widowed and left on her own has set her hope on God and perseveres night and day in petitions and prayers." (1 Timothy 5:5). *Ursula Walker (OCW)*

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Students consider 'What Really Matters'

Stonyhurst College, Lancashire, held its first ever whole-school Mission in November. The normal school timetable was suspended for two and a half days to allow the entire Stonyhurst community to focus on who they are, their unique talents, and their vocation in life. Looking outwards, this was also a time for pupils to learn about the challenges and difficulties people face worldwide.

Visiting speakers talked about some of the world's urgent challenges, such as religious persecution, the plight of refugees, homelessness and isolation. Baroness Caroline Cox spoke about her charity, Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, which offers advocacy and aid to persecuted people who are 'off the radar'. Professor Lord Alton raised awareness about the plight of persecuted people in Pakistan and Burma.

Visiting theatre companies and professional musicians led pupils in drama and singing workshops. Award-winning Rise Theatre gave a presentation on well-being and happiness, which is essential as young people currently face increasing social and academic pressures.

The Ten Ten theatre group worked with children at the prep school, while CJM Music led singing sessions for each year-group.

Stonyhurst pupils were also very active during the Mission, raising over £2,000 for an African refugee charity, by taking part in a relay race. Younger children, at Stonyhurst St Mary's Hall, held a lively party for local senior citizens. Every sixth-form student volunteered their services at local special schools, care homes, hospices, charities for the homeless and foodbanks.

They also cleared the local cemetery of brambles, leaves and dead-wood.

Two extraordinary days at Stonyhurst culminated in the celebration of Mass the day after the appalling terrorist attacks in Paris. Fr Philip Endean SJ the principal celebrant said it was worth thinking about the lesson in that accident of timing: "When we talk about letting our lights shine, we're not talking about something that is easy or cheap. The terrible news shouldn't take away the joy and enthusiasm with which we celebrate our faith, but it can serve to remind us that the faith we celebrate will always be something of a challenge, a provocation, an expression of hope against the background of a world often tempted towards despair."

Stonyhurst's lay chaplain, Sarah Young, who co-ordinated the planning of the Mission over many months, said: "Sometimes it is worth taking a risk and doing something different. This Mission has been different and, by the smiles on people's faces, it has been worth the risk. It has felt extraordinary and yet it has also been a celebration of our ordinary, everyday endeavour."

A sixth form student said: "I have had a great time throughout the Mission. It was at times challenging but ultimately it was a very refreshing experience, for which I am very grateful."

Headmaster Andrew Johnson said: "The Mission is a unique event at Stonyhurst and has been a huge success. This vital time-out from routine has allowed our pupils to grow in self-esteem and to discern how they can make a difference in the world by using their unique gifts and talents. It has given us all time to reflect on what really matters."

Dawn Johnson – Press Officer



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Clare walks the talk!

Clare Plasom-Scott gave an impassioned, interesting and inspired presentation to North Lancashire Circle of the Catenian Association about her visit to Zambia. It was a tribute to the Bursary Fund that should encourage students to refresh their faith by applying for a grant.

Whilst she was studying at Lancaster University, she spotted the Association's poster giving information about its Bursary Fund. She had already planned to make a three month visit in March 2015 to a community of Catholic Sisters in the Monze Diocese of Zambia, and was already raising funds. The Monze Diocese is the partner diocese of her parish of St Catherine's in Penrith, Cumbria. Two Catenian Brothers, Bill Arnold, Charity Officer, and President Wilfred Gill presented her with £400 from the Bursary Fund at Mass.

Clare had planned her workload out there with the Sisters including working where she would be of most use, putting her faith into action and increasing her faith in community life. So she found herself working amongst the poor, in the school and hospital with the Sisters, caring for those confined at home with disease and working in the local health clinic.

Returning with stories, having increasing her knowledge, she was able to strengthening the links between the Monze Diocese and her parish so that they can better support them.

Clare also spoke about her time at Lancaster University where she came across many difficulties in practising her faith, because it is such a secular institution. Clare is now working for the charity LIFE in Manchester, going into schools and parish meetings, to talk about the work of LIFE.

Once again St. Bernard's primary school, Preston has responded to the needs of others; this time to the Salvation Army Christmas appeal. Lots of donations were made which, hopefully brought some happiness to those less fortunate.

Well done everyone!



Shield Presentation

One of the annual awards for service to the school and community presented to leavers of St Bede's High School, is the Catenian Association Circle Shield.

The Shield is awarded to the pupil(s) the school consider to have been outstanding in helping both the school and community. This year, for the first time, there were three recipients, Clara and Ryan from The Willows, Kirkham and Natasha from Our Lady Star of the Sea, St Annes-on-Sea.



ST FRANCIS LEPROSY GUILD

This year The St Francis Leprosy Guild celebrates its 120th anniversary as the only UK Catholic leprosy charity to support over 80 centres in Africa, Asia and South America. Four of our elective students spoke at our Annual Mass celebrated by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, about their work with leprosy sufferers.



Please remember those who suffer from leprosy, their families and those who care for them

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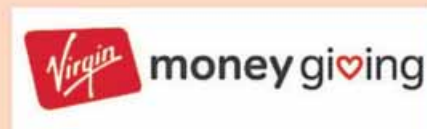
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Come Holy Ghost Creator Come, And the Bishop came Again and then Again!

The Parish of Christ the King and St Kentigern's Blackpool, had the pleasure of Bishop Campbell OSA visiting the parish for the Confirmation of our Children. Two Confirmation Masses were held at St Kentigern's Church, on Thursday November 26th and then at Christ The King on Sunday 29th November.

This was the 8th Consecutive year that the Parish has had the pleasure of welcoming Bishop Michael to be the Celebrant. The Children of St Kentigern's and Christ the King were all very aware of the magnitude of the occasion. The culmination of months of work along this path of spirituality leading to the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Children were not alone on this Spiritual Journey. Supported by their parents and sponsors and the prayers of the whole parish and guided by Fr John Winstanley, Parish Priest and the teaching staff at St Kentigern's and of Christ The King and the Parish Catechists.

In his Homily Bishop Campbell said that he wished he "could explain the Holy Spirit, but

he couldn't". - "Only to say, it is the Love of God for his Son and the Love of God the Son for his Father." However, all became clear from the candidates themselves, when they were asked by Bishop Michael to renew the vows that had been made on their behalf at their Baptism; For in unison and with a loud voice to each question they all exclaimed "I DO", that was proof indeed of The Love that is the Holy Spirit. The Children had provided the explanation! They had spoken, so convincingly, because they understood, and it was equally clear for all of us who witnessed it. That the Love that is the Holy Spirit was within them.

Each of the Candidates received a Bible and certificate from the parishioners and respective PTFAs.

In good old fashioned tradition the Candidates and their families, friends and fellow parishioners gathered in the Parish Centre at St Kentigern's and the Dining Hall of St Mary's College, where the children celebrated with lots of good things to eat and a special "Celebratory Confirmation Cakes" ceremoniously cut by Bishop Michael. *Angelita Smith*



Bishop Michael Campbell was the chief celebrant at a Mass to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Christ the King Catholic High School in Preston.

The school which opened in 1965 and started life as St John Fisher RC High School, has served the Catholic community of central and south Preston ever since. Also present were Canon Tony Walsh and Fr Frank Osman from the Parish of St John XXIII and Canon Luiz Ruscillo and Fr Jim Allen from the Diocesan Education Service; they joined the students, staff and governors in a beautiful celebration in recognition of the gifts of the past 50 years.

Bishop Campbell paid tribute to past and present staff, governors and students of the school for all their hard work and dedication. He also spoke about Christ the King as being an example of "love, justice

and peace". He also commented on the excellent behaviour of the students and the respect they showed for the Liturgy. The school, which received an "outstanding" Diocesan Inspection in June, is recognised as a place where students make excellent progress and receive the highest levels of pastoral care.

Headteacher, Damien Callagher, said, "I am delighted that we were able to come together as a community to celebrate all that is so special about Christ the King. It was wonderful to see our students so engaged in the Mass, they really enjoyed it. Having Bishop Campbell with us helped to make it such a special occasion."

After Mass Bishop Campbell took time out to meet with students, he was even interviewed by the school's News Team, a copy of which is on the school website www.ctlk.lancs.sch.uk

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Shrine Church of St Walburge, Preston
Mondays - Fridays: 8.30 am, Low Mass (except First Friday 7.00 pm)
Saturdays: 10.30 am, Low Mass Sundays: 10.30 am, Sung Mass

Tuesday 2nd February at 7.30 am
Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Our Lady & St Joseph, Carlisle

Tuesday 2nd February at 7.00 pm
Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary
St Walburge, Preston

Wednesday 10th February at 7.30 am
Ash Wednesday
Our Lady & St Joseph, Carlisle

Wednesday 10th February at 8.30 am & 7.00 pm
Ash Wednesday
St Walburge, Preston

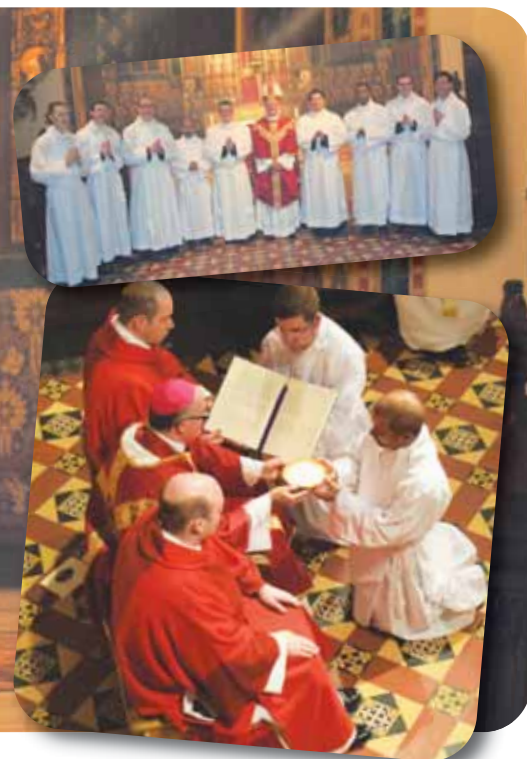
Thursday 11th February at 7.00 pm
Our Lady of Lourdes
Our Lady & St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge, Carlisle

Sunday 14th February at 3.00 pm
First Sunday in Lent
St Mary's, Hornby
(Please note that this has transferred from the Cathedral)

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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Ministry of Acolyte

*In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.*



When asked if I would write a small piece on my journey this year on the way to being given the ministry of acolyte I wondered what to write it on? The first verse of the song “*In Christ Alone*” gave me my introduction. My name is Stephen and I am a third year seminarian for the Diocese of Lancaster. In our third year we are instituted into the Ministry of Acolyte, and this took place during Holy Mass on the 24th November last year.

“An Acolyte is appointed to aid the deacon and to minister to the priest at the altar and as a special minister to give Holy Communion to the faithful at Mass and to the sick. Acolytes may also expose the Eucharist for public adoration in the absence of a priest or deacon. During the institution ceremony, candidates are reminded that they will have a special role in the Church’s ministry, since the summit and source of the Church’s life is the Eucharist, which builds up the Christian community and makes it grow. The candidates are asked to show a sincere love for Christ’s Mystical Body, God’s holy people and especially for the weak and the sick.”

The third year is quite a big academic year

as it’s the final year of the first degree we study for at the college, hence myself and my fellow third year students are quite frazzled in the run up to the first term essay and assignment deadlines. Two other students and I are also on weekly placement at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Birmingham, where as part of the multi faith chaplaincy team we visit the wards and patients offering a chat, prayer and support. For the first few weeks we were paired with a chaplain from another faith and it was my privilege to go to some visits with the Sikh chaplain. It was humbling to be able to witness the care and compassion he offered the sick patients, especially praying with a man who had been told his cancer was terminal. The following week I went out with the Anglican chaplain, and again it was inspirational to witness his dedication and ease at which he put the patients we visited.

I have worked for the NHS in the past and have been in and around hospitals for a number of years, but never in the role of a chaplaincy team ward visitor. For me the role of visitor is very hard, having to approach people who I don’t know at a very difficult time in their lives, what should I

say? What can I say? It’s frustrating not being able to help in any way that can alleviate their pain. All I can offer is someone to talk to and pray with if they would like to. It’s at times like these that the line of the hymn become so real and relevant, “*In Christ alone my hope is found*”, He is my hope, in Him alone I trust, He is my strength.

Last year before returning to the college to start my second year I was at Holy Mass, the doubts about my vocation to the priesthood filling my mind. When, out of the blue, a young nun who was sitting behind me, tapped me on the shoulder and said “*Always remember to keep your eyes on Jesus*”. This is exactly what I needed to hear, I felt strengthened, resolved and at peace.

What heights of love, what depths of peace, When fears are stilled, when strivings cease! My Comforter, my All in All, Here in the love of Christ I stand.

Please pray for the Seminarians and all those who are thinking about priesthood, that they may have the faith, strength and courage to follow our Loving Lords path.

Stephen Tallbut

Listen to the hymn at:
<https://youtu.be/8welVgKX8Qo>

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'Panunuluyan (Posadas)' Filipino Christmas Play

Just before Christmas the Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Filipino Community came together to celebrate with Filipino Chaplain Fr Jason Dy SJ before his return to take up a university teaching post in the Philippines after 2 years here in the UK.

The Community gathered at St Kentigern's Church for a final Mass and the occasion

was made extra special with a special Filipino Christmas Play 'Panunuluyan (Posadas)'.

Five scenes from the Nativity were acted out processing around the Church led by Fr Jason Dy (SJ) and Fr John Winstanley, PP, going from 'house' to 'house' and being met with refusals to stay. Hymns were sung in procession along the way. At the fourth 'house' they are at last offered a place. The

'Holy Family' then processed to the the Sanctuary (*the stable*) where the children dressed as animals are waiting and in the final scene, the offertory procession, led by the three kings bearing gifts of bread and wine for Mass and gifts for baby Jesus in the Manger. At the end of Mass 'When the Child is born' was sung. A Farewell Party was later held in the Parish Centre in honour of Fr Jason.

The Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Community thank Fr Jason for his spiritual guidance and inspiration and for sharing his valuable time with the Filipino Community despite his hectic schedule. We wish him all the best. They also thank Fr John for his support to the Filipino Community's Church activities and his generosity of the use of St Kentigern's Church and Parish Hall.

Angelita Smith

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In late October over 500 deacons from all over the world and their wives attended the Golden Jubilee of the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate to the Catholic Church.

The venue was Fraterna Domus in Rome. The event was organised by the International Diaconate Centre in Germany. Deacons from every continent participated in the great event. They came from China, India, Australia, New Zealand, U.S.A, Canada, most European countries, South America and Africa. In fact 37 countries were represented in total.

Each daily Mass was concelebrated by several bishops all of whom expressed their sincere support for the Diaconate. A bishop came from Russia where they are about to start training for the diaconate.

USA has the largest number of deacons, over 18,000. Places like India 16 and Hong Kong 20. Both countries have only recently begun to ordain permanent deacons. During the 5 days of the Jubilee visits were made to Assisi as well as various churches in Rome. St. Paul's Outside the Walls, a

basilica, where St. Paul's remains are, was one and St. Lawrence's church, where the deacon martyr's body is kept - (*his head being kept at the Vatican!*) was another. The week coincided with the additional week of the synod on family life and marriage. On the Thursday night a German Bishop gave the deacons a brief outline on what had been discussed at the Synod and he finished with a very open questions and answers session.

Pope Francis had intended to meet with the deacons on the Thursday but this had to be postponed as on that day the final draught proposals of the synod had been drawn up for all the participants to read overnight in order to vote on the contents on the Friday. He sent a letter expressing his support for the diaconate and his disappointment at having to cancel his private audience with them. Pope Francis then invited the deacons to return to Rome in May when he could meet with them.

Deacon Bill Gillan from Our Lady Star of the Sea in St. Annes attended the Jubilee and is seen third from the left on the front row with some of his fellow deacons

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Jubilee Year of Mercy

"Listen! Anyone Who Has Ears to Hear!"

This was the 'wake-up' call from the gospel that Father Kevin Lowry used when he began the day of prayer and reflection organised by Women Together in the Diocese of Lancaster last November.

He first shared with us his conviction that a major weakness in our faith formation has been that we have not been helped to pray the gospels. We may have been taught to know the stories and events in them, hear them Sunday after Sunday, but we need to learn how to listen with the heart and contemplate the power of the Divine Word.

"Without listening to the Word, without listening to the will of God, without a spirit of adoration and without constant prayer there will be no renewal of the Church." **Bishop Walter Kasper**

"Read the Gospels, and allow God to whisper in your minds and into your hearts words that can have a profound effect on the way we think and act...But we must stop from time to time, and make space in the day, and especially in the mind, and ask Him to make us aware of His presence. When he does, it is the language of love that becomes the only appropriate one. When that happens, we have

discovered true religion." **Cardinal Basil Hume**

Father Kevin introduced us to a way of prayer that allows the gospel to nourish us: **lectio divina**. He suggested that we take our New Testament and pick out half a dozen texts that we love and each time we give to prayer to focus on just one of them. First, we take a moment to place ourselves in the presence of God, asking God's Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds as we listen to the gospel. Then we take the passage we have chosen and read it very slowly; we allow the words to speak to us now, nourish us, prompt us, move and even challenge us. We read them over again slowly and then sit quietly with whatever has struck us – a word, a scene, a character, realising that these words are for me. They move us into knowing Jesus more intimately, letting him become more and more the one who is at the centre of our lives. We were then offered a choice of two gospel moments, to spend some time with them and experience this for ourselves.

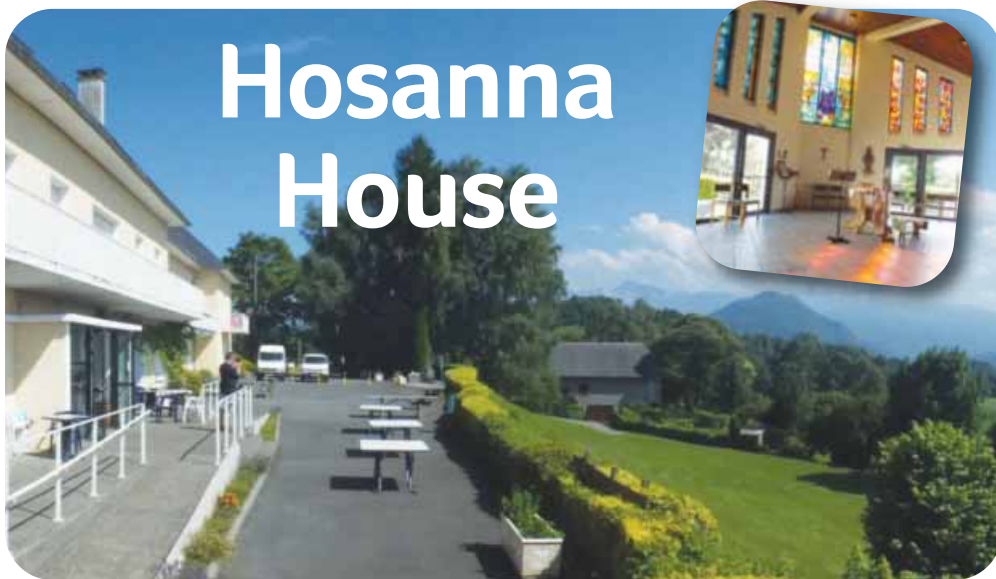
In the afternoon talk Father Kevin moved us deeper into the mystery that is prayer with the gospel. This holy listening makes us

vulnerable to God's grace so it can touch us and move us into a different level of awareness of God's presence within us. He suggested we might want to use our own special prayer word or mantra when we try to still ourselves in readiness to listen. He described how a little prayer focus in our homes – a lit candle, an icon or crucifix – can also help us.

Mass together was in honour of Our Blessed Lady. Father Kevin showed us how the gospel of the Annunciation spoke to us of our calling too, to be handmaids of the Lord, especially in the forthcoming Jubilee Year of Mercy so as to become, as Pope Francis invites us, "missionaries of mercy" to our broken world.

In the Church we are blessed with many ways of praying, many forms of prayer and devotions, many beautiful words, but with Father Kevin's help we were being shown that this praying by listening to the gospel is essential because through it we come to an ever deeper love of Christ. All of us who shared this day knew we were being enriched by someone for whom this was at the centre of his life.

Philomena Grimley SHCJ



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can be in the spiritual heart of town in just a few minutes in one of the house's shuttle buses. At the centre of Hosanna House, both literally and spiritually, is its chapel with its beautiful stained glass windows. Here you will be able to enjoy Mass, other services or find an inspiring place for private prayer and contemplation.

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If you know of, or are part of, a group that might enjoy a stay at Hosanna House for your Lourdes pilgrimage please let us know by emailing hq@hcpt.org.uk or call **01788 564646**. For more details of HCPT in the Lancaster Diocese, contact richard.mcdowell@naphens.co.uk

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Long gone are the days of having to listen to a teacher or lecturer drone on endlessly with nothing to visually focus our attention upon...

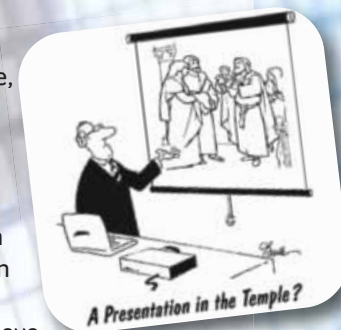
Instead, we are regularly treated to PowerPoint and Prezi presentations; DVDs, YouTube excerpts, podcasts and Chromecasts, among many others. However, there is a 'but' and it's quite a big one. Wonderful though technology is, it can and does go wrong ... regularly.

SILENT SCREEN

How many times have you been to a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation and found that either the projector has packed up or the Internet has failed? How many times have you been psyched up and ready to watch a DVD and found that you could either hardly hear the sound or it did not work at all? Instead you had to watch the people on the screen silently opening and shutting their mouths like goldfishes! And even more likely, how many times has that annoying Internet 'buffering' completely ruined what you were trying to watch? In short, presentations can and do go wrong all

the time, often with disastrous yet amusing results. Although completely different in nature, Jesus too, was part of a presentation.

He was presented at the temple in Jerusalem in accordance with the Law of Moses, which said that every male must be consecrated to God. In a similar way to the confusion that we feel when current technology fails, Mary and Joseph were confounded by all they heard that day, about Jesus. Yet through their confusion shone a beacon of love and hope, as they were told by both Simeon and Anna that their child would be the redeemer of all nations.



LIGHT AND HOPE

Technology may fail, our plans may miscarry and inevitably we may feel confused. Yet through the fog of confusion can shine inspiration, light and hope. Jesus is all of these for each and every one of us. Better still, we need see no presentation, use no IT and never have to 'log on' to be in touch with him!

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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