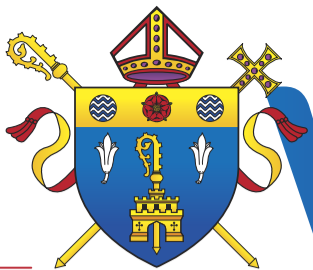


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The Catholic



VOICE of Lancaster

The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 363 + October '24

INSIDE:

pg10 Celebrating the 10 Year Anniversary of the Catholic Teaching Alliance - 350 not out!



Theme for World Day of Peace 2025 Announced

The World Day of Peace is observed each year on January 1, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Since its establishment in 1967 by Pope St Paul VI, the Popes have taken the occasion to offer magisterial reflections in Messages for the day, dealing with topics such as the United Nations, human rights, diplomacy, and economic development.

The theme chosen by the Holy Father for the World Day of Peace for 2025 is, "Forgive us our trespasses: grant us your

peace", corresponding to "the biblical and ecclesial understanding of the Jubilee Year".

Hope and forgiveness at the heart of the Jubilee

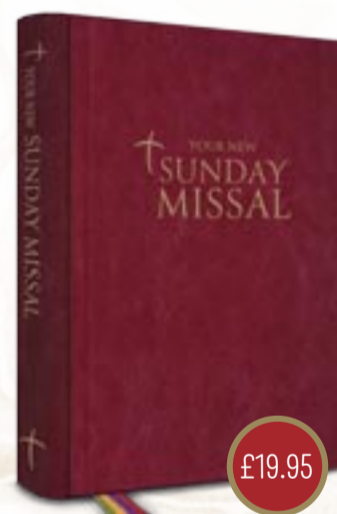
In its statement, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development says the theme is inspired by Pope Francis's encyclical letters Laudato si and Fratelli tutti, "and above all by the concepts of Hope and Forgiveness, which are at the heart of the Jubilee, a time for conversion that calls us not to condemn, but instead to bring about reconciliation and peace".

The Dicastery went on to note by "considering the reality of conflicts and social sins afflicting humanity today in light of the hope inherent in the Jubilee tradition of the forgiveness of sins and the cancellation of debts, together with the reflections of the Fathers of the Church in this regard, concrete principles emerge that can lead to a much-needed spiritual, social, economic, ecological and cultural change". The Dicastery added that peace comes not only from an end to conflicts, "but also in a new reality in which wounds are healed and each person's dignity is recognised". **CBCEW**



Only from a genuine conversion on all levels – personal, local and international will true peace be able to flourish.

- the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development



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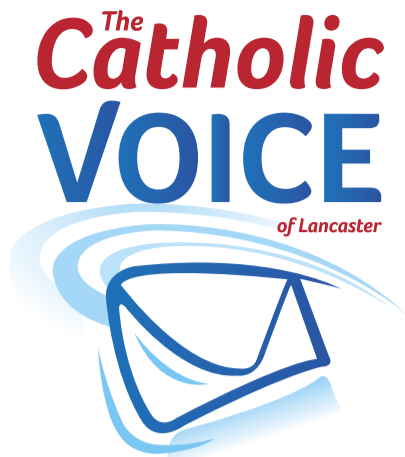
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Bishop John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues for the Bishops' Conference, is encouraging Catholics to unite in prayer and compassionate action as Parliament prepares to renew the debate around assisted suicide:

"Parliament returned in September, and with it the prospect of renewed debates on the ethics of assisted suicide. The second reading of Lord Falconer's 'Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill', which seeks to legalise assisted suicide, will take place in the House of Lords. There will be an attempt to introduce a similar Bill to the House of Commons.

"I wish to reaffirm that the Catholic Church has always been opposed to assisted suicide in every circumstance. The legalisation of assisted suicide undermines the sanctity and dignity of human life. There is also now ample evidence across the world that the legalisation of assisted suicide puts the most vulnerable members of society at risk.

"The Catholic Church accompanies those suffering and nearing the end of their lives with hope and affection, but also reminds them that their life is precious until the very last breath. This is the work

that hospices and other healthcare institutions and hundreds of thousands of individual carers undertake every day, helping the terminally ill and dying to leave this world whilst preserving their dignity. They truly provide assistance to those who are dying.

"In preparation for these challenging debates, let us offer our prayers for those facing the end of their lives, that they may receive the care and support they need to live their final days with respect for their dignity. Let us also pray for our politicians and our country that wisdom and compassion may guide their decisions. I also urge all Catholics to become better informed about the serious problems associated with the legalisation of assisted suicide.

"We encourage everyone to use resources on the end of life that can be found on the Life Issues pages of the Bishops' Conference website to better understand the implications of assisted suicide. It is also possible to contact your Member of Parliament to ask their views on a number of life issues.

"Let us unite in prayer and compassionate action as Parliament prepares to consider these issues."

CBCEW



The Catholic Chaplaincy has provided me with such an amazing community of people and University would not be the same without them.



Liberty Doyle of St Joseph's Ansdell is a student at Queen's University Belfast and with the Catholic Chaplaincy Choir there had a private audience with Pope Francis during their tour to Italy in June.

Liberty said:

Since joining Queen's University Belfast I have been involved in the Catholic Chaplaincy which is a great community and has many extracurricular groups such as Bible studies and the choir. As a member of the Choir I have regularly sung at Mass and been involved in multiple concerts.

In June the choir went on tour to Italy which was an amazing experience. We first went to Rome and had a general audience with Pope Francis and, when we thought things couldn't get any better, we went to Loppiano, a remote village in Tuscany.

Loppiano is home to the Focolare movement, founded by Chiara Lubich. The movement promotes the Golden rule and living in unity. People from all over the world are gathered there. We were working closely with the women's band, 'Gen Verde', who are all incredible artists. They helped us prepare for singing at their Sunday Mass.

It was an honour to sing with them and everyone felt that the performance and preparation had an impact on both their singing and spirituality.

Gen Verde also organised many trips for us, we did day trips to Florence, Assisi and Arezzo. It was amazing to explore Italy and visit the different holy places. It was an amazing trip and I felt honoured to be a part of it. The Catholic chaplaincy has provided me with such an amazing community of people and university would not be the same without them.

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Jack Regan writes, the building here at Castlerigg is getting colder and colder. Summer is gone, the rains are upon us and we are working as hard as we can to avoid putting the heating back on.

It's going to be a busy year ahead. We are working with more schools than we have for a very long time, and we've got a load of open programmes and outreach visits planned too.

With a new year comes a new team! A few more people will be joining us in the weeks ahead, but we have already welcomed Lucy, Mayeule, Daisy and Grace. They come from a load of different places, with a load of different experiences, and they have already gelled together really well. Check out our social media feeds for a bit more on the new team.

We are holding our first Open Day in a very long time and we have no idea how many people are planning to come, but expect a full report next time round!

What else is there to report..?

Open weekends and Quiet weekends // A New Venture //

This year, we are starting an exciting new initiative aimed at adults and families. Sometimes, when we have a free weekend, we will open it up as either a 'quiet weekend' or a 'family weekend.' Quiet weekends are there for individual adults who want to have a reflective, peaceful weekend in the Lakes. A single room and all meals are provided as well as Mass on site.

Open weekends are similar, but not as quiet! They're also open to families and if

we get enough people, we'll put on a quiz in the evening too!

These weekends open up at about 6 weeks notice to keep an eye on our website and social media.

Would YOU like to join the team?

Don't forget that, we are always looking for young Christians (usually aged 18-22) to join our Youth Ministry Internship Scheme. It's a great chance to get some brilliant training, qualifications, and experiences.

We now operate a rolling recruitment system for interns (formerly called Gap Year volunteers) which means that suitable people can start at various different points in the year. For more information contact **jack@castleriggmanor.co.uk** or check out our

website – castleriggmanor.com - or out Instagram channels [@castleriggmanor](https://www.instagram.com/castleriggmanor) and [@team_castlerigg](https://www.instagram.com/team_castlerigg)

What's coming up?

Catholic Students Retreat // November 15-17 //

After the success of our first students retreat last year, we are holding another one this autumn. Once again, there will be a discounted rate for students and this year there will be a theme holding the weekend together. Bookings will open in the summer.

Advent Retreat // December 13-15 //

The next open retreat after the summer retreat will be the Advent Retreat in mid December. Bookings open in September.

Pope Francis: A Beacon of Hope and Inspiration for the Younger Generation

Pope Francis, since his papacy began in 2013, has made a huge impact on people worldwide, particularly on children and teenagers. His unique approach, emphasizing compassion, humility, and inclusivity, has resonated deeply with the younger generation, making him not just a religious figure but a global moral leader. In this edition, we're going to take a look at some of the ways in which Pope Francis and his teaching have impacted the younger members – and prospective members – of the Church.

Building a Connection

Pope Francis has a special way of connecting with the youth. His language, often simple and direct, strikes a chord with young people. He speaks of issues close to their hearts – climate change, poverty, social justice, and the importance of dreams and aspirations. He acknowledges their struggles and fears, offering words of encouragement and hope.

This connection is evident during World Youth Day celebrations, where he engages with young people from around the world, listening to them and sharing his message of love and unity. He's not the first Pope to do this, of course. Pope John Paul II set the standard high here, but Francis has certainly met it!

A Message of Hope and Inclusivity

Pope Francis has often emphasized a message of inclusivity, reaching out to those on the fringes – the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed. This message resonates with today's youth, who are increasingly aware of and concerned about social issues. His call for a "poor Church for the poor" and his actions, like washing the feet of prisoners, including young offenders, speak volumes to children and teenagers about the kind of compassion and solidarity they can aspire to.

Contrary to some assumptions, he hasn't changed Church teaching and he doesn't shy away from affirming the Church's teaching on some of the more delicate issues. But yet he also shows that taking a firm line on something doesn't stop us from loving!

Focus on Environmental Stewardship

In his encyclical, "Laudato Si'," Pope Francis addresses the issue of climate change, a subject of paramount importance to the younger generation. He calls for collective responsibility to protect our common home, urging for action against the environmental crisis. This has inspired many young people, motivating them to become more actively involved in environmental advocacy and to live more sustainably.

Embracing Modernity and Technology

Pope Francis has been open to using technology to reach out to young people. He maintains an active presence on social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram, understanding these as spaces where he can connect with the youth. This approach has made him more accessible and relatable to children and teenagers, who often look to digital spaces for guidance and inspiration.



Promoting Education and Critical Thinking

Pope Francis has consistently emphasized the importance of education. He encourages young people to remain curious, to ask questions, and to seek truth. This encouragement of critical thinking and the pursuit of knowledge is particularly appealing to teenagers, who are in a stage of life where questioning and understanding the world around them are paramount.

Youth Empowerment and Leadership

Pope Francis believes in empowering young people to be agents of change. He encourages them to take active roles in their communities and the Church. By recognizing the capabilities and potential of children and teenagers, he has inspired many to take leadership roles, whether in small community projects or larger global initiatives.

A Fresh Emphasis

For young Catholics, Pope Francis has been a source of rejuvenation. Following on from his predecessors, his emphasis on mercy, grace, and love has made Catholicism appealing to the youth. His emphasis on a personal relationship with God and living out one's faith through actions resonates with young people seeking a more authentic and practical expression of their beliefs.

Conclusion

Pope Francis' impact on children and teenagers transcends religious boundaries. He has emerged as a moral compass, a voice of conscience in a world grappling with numerous challenges. Through his words and actions, he has inspired the younger generation to live with compassion, to care for the environment, and to be proactive agents of change.

His papacy has not only brought a fresh perspective to the Church's engagement with the youth but has also provided a beacon of hope and inspiration for young people around the world, guiding them towards a future of greater understanding, tolerance, and unity.

David Pope dip FD MBIFD

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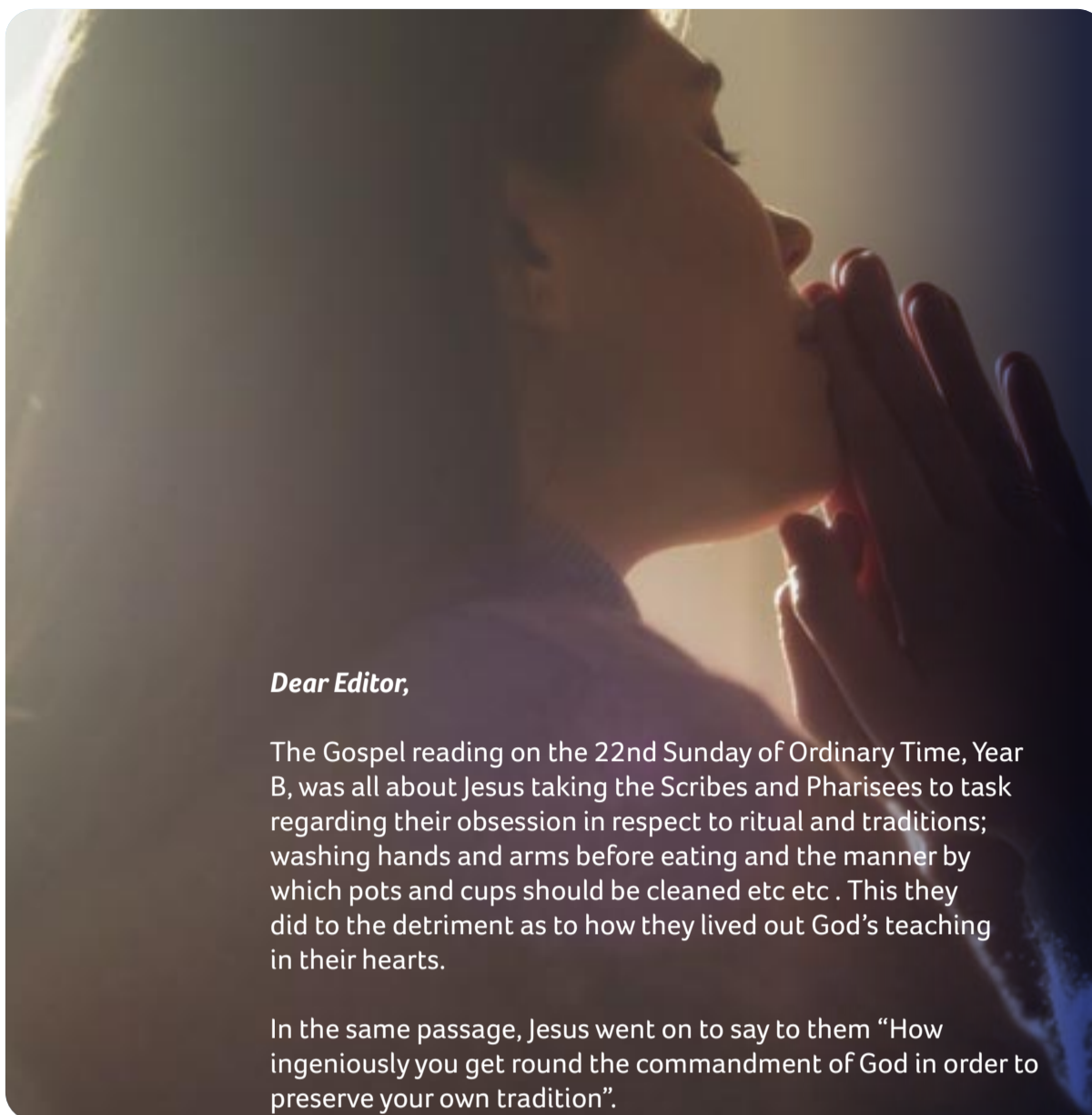
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- The editor reserves the right to:
 - Amend or shorten letters or to refuse to publish them (no correspondence to discuss decisions taken will be entered into)
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Dear Editor,

The Gospel reading on the 22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B, was all about Jesus taking the Scribes and Pharisees to task regarding their obsession in respect to ritual and traditions; washing hands and arms before eating and the manner by which pots and cups should be cleaned etc etc . This they did to the detriment as to how they lived out God's teaching in their hearts.

In the same passage, Jesus went on to say to them "How ingeniously you get round the commandment of God in order to preserve your own tradition".

Now I'm not religious scholar, indeed I suspect that like many in the Church I'm woefully ignorant of much of its teachings, but this passage got me thinking about how much tradition and ritual the Church still thrives on today. In particular the "rule" if there is one, about only having male priests and Deacons. Why? I ask myself.

If a woman was good enough to be the Mother of Jesus, (*and the only mortal to be raised to heaven body and soul*); if the women mentioned continuously in the Bible were good enough to care for Jesus during his ministry and to the shame of all but one male, stand at the foot of the Cross, how come the Church sees fit to bar them from being priests and deacons in continuation of that same ministry they provided two thousand years ago?

Is it because of some deep theological teaching revealed to man by the Holy Spirit, or is it because the early church being led by a traditional predominately male "clergy", decided it was going to hang on to such a tradition in order to keep the male preserve?

Today, more and more women are assuming roles throughout the church. I refer here to those who are an integral part of virtually every parish as opposed to those in religious orders; yet even now they are still barred - by tradition- from assuming higher office.

I'm guessing I've stirred up a hornets nest and doubtless many will be jumping to the defence of the status quo, I'm also guessing others might just agree with me.

Either way the question however will not go away, the tradition will only continue to be challenged more loudly.

Yours sincerely
Christopher P Crocker, Ansdell

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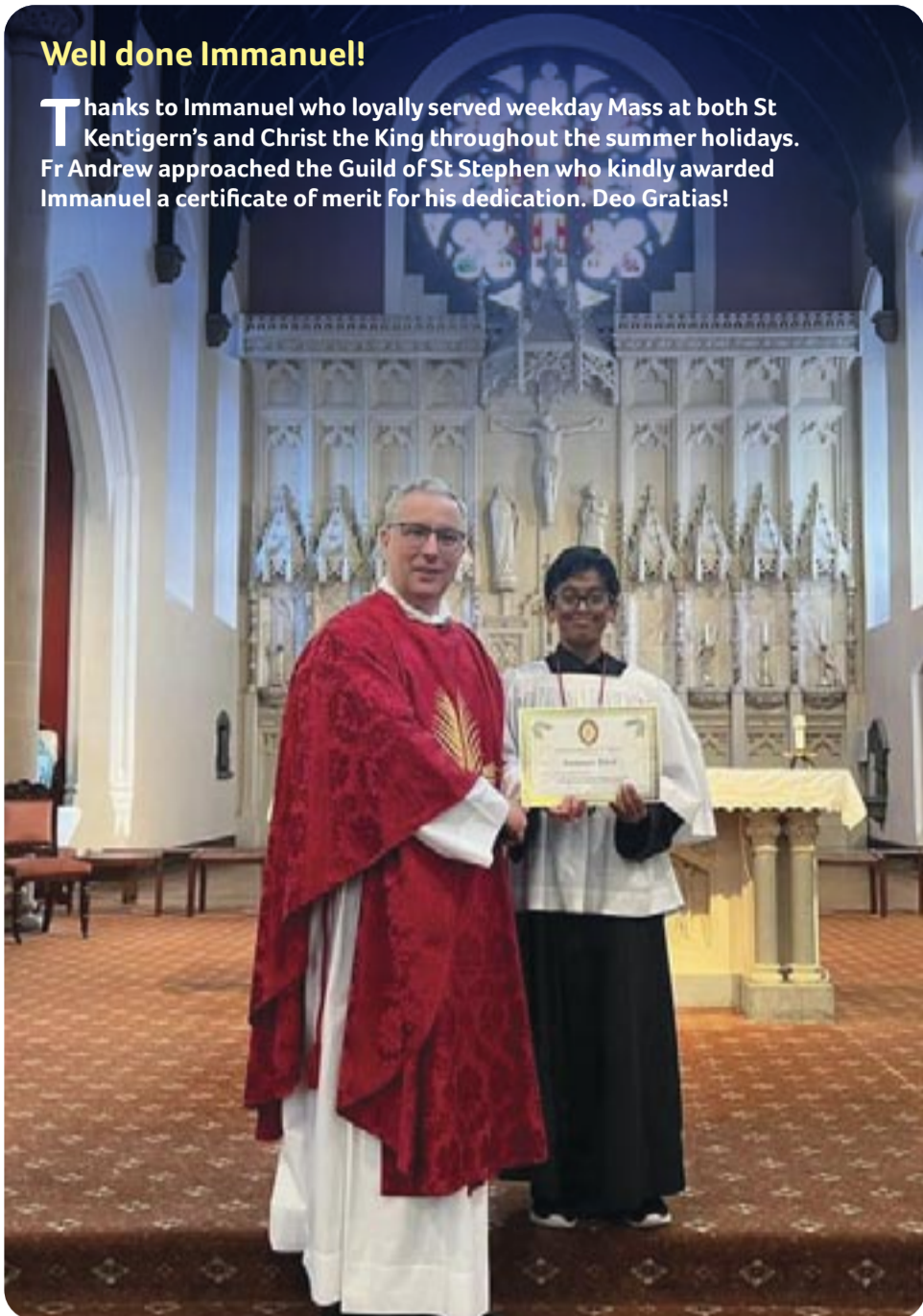
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Well done Immanuel!

Thanks to Immanuel who loyally served weekday Mass at both St Kentigern's and Christ the King throughout the summer holidays. Fr Andrew approached the Guild of St Stephen who kindly awarded Immanuel a certificate of merit for his dedication. Deo Gratias!



DIOCESE OF LANCASTER

Centenary Prayer

God our Father, we thank you for all the graces and blessings You have bestowed on our Diocese since its foundation one hundred years ago on ground made fertile by the blood of the martyrs.

Nourished by your Son, Jesus Christ, in Word and Sacraments, and led by your Holy Spirit, may we move forward with hope and trust, helping future generations to discover the "pearl of great price" which will bring them eternal life. And when time shall be no more, may our Diocese rejoice as the "mother of countless children," and be given her place in heavenly glory.

This we ask of you who live and reign for ever and ever. *Amen*

*Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.
St. Cuthbert, pray for us.
Holy Martyrs of our Diocese, pray for us.*



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Rev Deacon Anthony Edwards R.I.P.

29th March 1934 –
11th June 2023



Obituary taken from the eulogy of the Requiem Mass at Sacred Heart Church, Thornton-Cleveleys. Written by Paul Edwards, son of Deacon Tony Edwards.

We are here today to say goodbye to my father in this church which witnessed some of the major events in his life and played such a central role over the course of nearly 90 years. This community meant so much to him, from his early years as an altar server during the war, through to his ordination as Deacon 50 years later, his life and that of the parish have inextricably linked until today.

His strong unwavering faith was established early in his life as evidenced by his time at Thistleton and Upholland seminaries which shaped the man he would become and the way he approached life. He did not parade his faith as some visible badge of honour or wear it on his sleeve, it was deeply personal and at the core of his character which was one of generosity, integrity and humility. As a family we have received so many kind words and messages over the last few weeks it has been truly overwhelming, I know my dad

would have been genuinely surprised and perhaps a little embarrassed by them all, but he would also have been very touched.

He was born a short walk away into Thornton a much smaller and close-knit than today and a world away from the turmoil which would soon engulf Europe. The youngest of four children he attended Sacred Heart school before going onto the Diocesan seminaries. At 19 his National Service saw him posted to war torn Berlin, where, as a member of the Army Dental Corps he made a major contribution to world history by making Rudolph Hess's dentures.

A couple of years after his return he married my mother to begin what would prove to be 66 years of marriage.

I could make a long list of the memories that we had as young children but suffice it to say we had the happiest of childhoods, money may have been tight early on, but we lacked for nothing. As with all families we have had our share of joys and sorrows, the tragic loss of my brother several years ago being the worst.

Securing a position as an investment manager in the newly formed GMC led to many years of long day's commuting to Manchester.

Retirement beckoned 30 years ago which led into the next phase of his life. He began studying for the diaconate, this together with the appearance of grandchildren resulted in a change of pace and priorities. With more time available, he was an active presence in their lives, spending a lot of time together during the summer months and I know that his loss will be deeply felt by them all.

He was ordained in this church in 1997 and continued actively in this position supporting several parish priests until illness made it too difficult to serve.

He was able to devote the time he did to the church only because of the support he received from my mother, something of which he was aware, his inability to fry an egg being just one example.

I would do him a grave disservice if I failed to mention the side of his character that often went unnoticed.

Somewhat reserved in a large group he was extremely good company in more intimate settings, intelligent, thoughtful and well read, he would often relate an anecdote or put forward a reasoned position. When travelling together we always talked often stopping for a beer 'en route'.

As we got older, my brother, sister and myself never stopped seeking his advice and always gave serious weight to his opinion.

Instead of creating a list of virtues I think Hamlet was more succinct in the epitaph given on his own father's passing,

"He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again".

If our lives are weighed by the soul's we touch on our journey then I take comfort in the knowledge that my dad made the world better just by being a part of it.

No one can hope to do more. Time goes by so quickly and we are here for such a short time, perhaps we should all strive to make a difference and relish our brief time in the sun.



125 Years since the Foundation of Sacred Heart Church, Thornton-Le-Fylde and the First Mass

In 1898, work began on Sacred Heart Church which was designed by Pugin & Pugin. The cost was about £6,000. On 17th April 1898, the foundation stone was laid by the then Bishop of Liverpool, Rt Rev Thomas Whiteside. The first Parish Priest was Fr Daniel Joseph O'Donoghue. Prior to the opening of the church, Mass was said in the newly opened Sacred Heart School. On 9th March 1899, Sacred Heart Church was opened for Public Mass.

Canon Joseph Bamber was the second and longest-serving Parish Priest from the years 1904-1947. Just after World War I, he was responsible for erecting the fine Rose window in memory of the Fallen of that War.

For the period 1947-1970, under Canon Patrick Joseph Guerin, the third Parish Priest, further changes to the church interior were made especially following Vatican II.

The Catholic Women's League, Thornton Section was formed on 14th May 1972 and is still going strong. Canon Thomas Dakin, Canon Guerin's successor oversaw the Consecration of Sacred Heart Church on 14th January 1973.

Sacred Heart Church was one of the founding churches of the Local Ecumenical Covenant (*now Churches Together in Thornton*) in 1988. On 4th July 1997, the Church celebrated the ordination of Rev Anthony Edwards as

Permanent Deacon. 17th April 1998 saw the 100th Anniversary of the Church's Foundation. Shortly after on 24th June 1998, the Church celebrated the ordination of Rev David Branford as Priest. Under Fr Branford the church received Grade II listed status. From 2007-2014, Fr Peter Clarke was the sixth Parish Priest followed by the present Parish Priest, Fr Peter Burns. Canon Thomas Dakin who was in retirement at St Nicholas Owen Presbytery, died on 18th February 2019 after 50 years service at Sacred Heart and St Nicholas Owen parishes, Thornton.


On 4th July 2022, Deacon Anthony Edwards celebrated 25 years as a Deacon. Sadly, on 11th June 2023, Deacon Tony

passed away after nearly 26 years service at Sacred Heart and St Nicholas Owen parishes.

The 50th Anniversary of the Consecration of Sacred Heart Church was celebrated on 14th January 2023. Later, on 17th April 2023 we saw the 125th Anniversary of the Church's Foundation. Bishop Paul Swarbrick was the principal celebrant of the Mass on that day.


To further mark the 125th Anniversary of the Church's Foundation, we had a floral display (*as evidenced in the photos of the church interior*). Mass was celebrated on 9th March 2024, marking the 125th Anniversary of the first Public Mass at Sacred Heart Church. *Fr Peter Burns*

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Celebrating the 10 Year Anniversary of the Catholic Teaching Alliance - 350 not out!

The 10 Year Anniversary of the Catholic Teaching Alliance took place in the Arts' Theatre of lead school Our Lady's Catholic High School in Fulwood.

Since its' launch in 2014 Our Lady's Catholic High School have worked in partnership with the University of Cumbria as a teacher training provider delivering PGCE with QTS. In that time the Catholic Teaching Alliance have trained some 350 teachers, many of whom work in our alliance of Catholic schools and colleges across the Dioceses of Lancaster, Salford and the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

The celebration evening was a fantastic occasion with a vibrant atmosphere as people came together for a Service of Thanks. It was wonderful to welcome Bishop Paul Swarbrick, headteachers and colleagues from our partner schools, who have contributed to and supported the work of the Catholic Teaching Alliance. Also, in attendance were many of our Alumni and current 2023-24 trainees, along with members of their families. The evening was a great success, thoroughly enjoyed by all!

Faith at the Heart

The Catholic Teaching Alliance has gained a reputation as an outstanding provider of teacher training. We are able to train outstanding teachers with the Catholic virtues and values firmly rooted at the centre of all that we do. As part of the PGCE with QTS, trainees can embark on the Catholic Certificate of Religious Education [CCRS] with the Diocese of Lancaster. Having recognised that there is a shortage of Catholic leaders in both primary and secondary Catholic schools our aim has been to develop the Catholic leaders of tomorrow.

Growing Our Own

Many graduates of the Catholic Teaching Alliance are now making a huge impact as Middle and Senior Leaders across our

family of Catholic schools across the North West.

Teaching is an enormously challenging profession, but the rewards are immense. We firmly believe that the Catholic Teaching Alliance training programme and the support that follows to prepare our teachers to face the demands of any classroom in order to meet the needs of our pupils is of the highest quality.

Teaching placements across the Catholic Teaching Alliance ensure that trainees work alongside outstanding practitioners within high performing schools. We enable the best qualified and experienced staff within our partnership schools to mentor trainees and deliver a quality assured training programme following the ITT Core Content Framework. Progress is assessed against the Teachers' Standards. Our distinct training programme provides trainees with opportunities to work alongside expert practitioners who will support and develop classroom practice and professional development throughout the course and beyond. Trained mentors will help trainees to understand their role within the context of the wider school. Trainee teachers are immersed into the Catholic Ethos and holistic life of the school and are given opportunities to work alongside outstanding teaching professionals, to share ideas and build knowledge together.

The Catholic Teaching Alliance continues to deliver excellence, underpinned by a shared ethos, passion and commitment to train and develop inspirational teaching professionals, who will aspire to become the Catholic school leaders of tomorrow.

The Catholic Teaching Alliance established in 2014 as a school-based provider of PGCE with QTS teacher training courses. Training is delivered by outstanding practitioners alongside experienced tutors from the University of Cumbria to deliver

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a comprehensive ITE Curriculum combined with practical experience gained on placements in local schools. For every level of teacher training, Early Primary, Primary, Secondary or Secondary with post 16, look no further than the Catholic Teaching Alliance.

Now in our 10th year of teacher training, the CTA has trained over 350 teachers, many of whom work in our alliance primary and secondary schools.

Hear what our trainees have to say about their experiences on the course...

"From the first moment, I felt very welcomed onto the course and very much supported throughout the year of study. The course allowed me to gain a lot of experience teaching in Catholic schools. Along with feeling very much supported by the course leaders, I have built up a real friendship with the other course members, feeling like we really do support each other on our journey together."

"The Catholic ethos shines through the Alliance and all associated with it I would highly recommend the CTA for anyone wishing to pursue their teaching career!"

"I would recommend the CTA to anyone wanting to pursue their career in teaching, feeling the support and training gained by the team will allow me to be the best teacher I can once I become a fully qualified teacher in the coming months."

"The Catholic Teaching Alliance is a lovely community which I am grateful to be a part of."

"I will always be grateful for my supportive mentors during my placement and the Catholic Teaching Alliance who have helped me through this journey. I have really enjoyed teaching, being a part of CTA and seeing how far I've come along."

"I wholeheartedly recommend training with the CTA; it absolutely helps you become the teacher you want to be."

If you are hardworking, relish a challenge and want to make a difference to the children who are placed in your care, we can provide the support, knowledge and experience you will need to achieve a Postgraduate Certificate in Education with Qualified Teacher Status.

How to Apply

To apply go to the Department for Education (Find postgraduate teacher training service) website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-postgraduate-teacher-training-courses-in-england> and search for us by postcode PR2 3SQ, name 'Catholic Teaching Alliance' or provider code 1GB. You can also apply directly on our website using 'Apply'.

Train to teach with the Catholic Teaching Alliance (24–25)

For more information contact the Partnership Programme Leader Adrian Gormally on (01772) 326931
Email: CTAschooldirect@olchs.lancs.sch.uk
Website: www.catholic-teaching-alliance.org

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Know Your Faith

Why are the beatitudes important for us?

The beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching and they take up and fulfil the promises that God made starting with Abraham. They depict the very countenance of Jesus and they characterise authentic Christian life. They reveal the ultimate goal of human activity, which is eternal happiness.

Further reading: CCC 1716-1717, 1725-1726

What is the relationship between the beatitudes and our desire for happiness?

The beatitudes respond to the innate desire for happiness that God has placed in the human heart in order to draw us to himself. God alone can satisfy this desire.

Further reading: CCC 1718-1719

What is eternal happiness?

It is the vision of God in eternal life in which we are fully "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), of the glory of Christ and of the joy of the trinitarian life. This happiness surpasses human capabilities. It is a supernatural and gratuitous gift of God just as is the grace which leads to it. This promised happiness confronts us with decisive moral choices concerning earthly good and urges us to love God above all things.

Further reading: CCC 1720-1724, 1727-1729

What is freedom?

Freedom is the power given by God to act or not to act, to do this or to do that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. Freedom characterizes properly human acts. The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. Freedom

attains its proper perfection when it is directed toward God, the highest good and our beatitude. Freedom implies also the possibility of choosing between good and evil. The choice of evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to the slavery of sin.

Further reading: CCC 1730-1733, 1743-1744

What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility?

Freedom makes people responsible for their actions to the extent that they are voluntary, even if the imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or sometimes cancelled by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, inordinate attachments, or habit.

Further reading: CCC 1734-1737, 1745-1746

Why does everyone have a right to exercise freedom?

The right to the exercise of freedom belongs to everyone because it is inseparable from his or her dignity as a human person. Therefore this right must always be respected, especially in moral and religious matters, and it must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and a just public order.

Further reading: CCC 1738, 1747

What place does human freedom have in the plan of salvation?

Our freedom is weakened because of original sin. This weakness is intensified because of successive sins. Christ, however, set us free "so that we should remain free" (Galatians 5:1). With his grace, the Holy Spirit leads us to spiritual freedom to make us free co-workers with him in the Church and in the world.

Further reading: CCC 1739-1742, 1748

Faith, Friends and Fleetwood

Continuing to search in Faith and make new friends in our small coastal town



Patricia Benson reflects on a poignant Eastertide: **Our Easter Celebrations went off with a bang where we came together to celebrate and give thanks to God for what he has done for us.**

A lot can happen in just three days. We really experienced this during the Triduum when we celebrated the Mass of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday before following Christ to the Cross on Good Friday culminating in the Easter celebration of the Resurrection. A mini pilgrimage when we intently listened to the words of scripture and celebrated the Sacraments.

But for me, this year, Easter Sunday was even more special as Canon Alf Hayes joined me and Stephen in Holy Matrimony. We were accompanied by many friends and family including my Nana.

Easter Sunday was perfect, we organised a Jacobs join, lots of fizz, Easter egg hunts, bonnet making, Fr Alf Hayes and his band played for us. We wanted this day for everyone, the church is our family. The church was full!!! Full of love!!

My Nana is my best friend and one of the strongest women I know. She has always lived by scripture and quoted it daily to me, reminding me that *“God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient”* Colossians 3:12.

Marriage is like this too. You have chosen for your own (*with a lot of prayer and guidance from God*) an imperfect person but the most perfect, special person for your own. Be gentle with their heart, be kind always and humble in growing together and being the calm within the storm. Each day is a gift and brings different challenges so be patient and be a team. Your own team cheering each other on, supporting each other to heaven.

After all, in the second reading on Easter Sunday *‘Let your thoughts be on things above, not on things that are on earth’.*

Stephen and I have both experienced challenges and hardships over the last few years, losing loved ones who we cared for in their last moments, battling health conditions, trying to pay bills with very little income, and trying to find hope in days of despair. We feel strong again together where life has begun somewhat easier, a shoulder to cry on, uncontrollable belly laughs, a heart to call my own.

From pain to paradise, we start this new journey with God helping weed the garden to bring more new life. We are excited to what life entails and even more thankful we have God who has everything under control focusing on heaven and the beauty it shares.



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The Wonderful Sacrament of the Sick - A Very Personal Experience

At midday on Friday 3rd May 2024, I was sitting in a café drinking coffee with my wife, Jeanie. We had gone there to buy some plants for our back garden. An hour later I was lying in an ambulance having a heart attack!

None of us know when a serious health issue is going to take place, often until it does, but God has given us a precious gift, the sacrament of the sick, and I would like to share with you my experience of this marvellous sacrament.

Returning home from the Garden Centre I busied myself planting the plants in the garden. It wasn't heavy work, and I was enjoying the warm spring sunshine when I started feeling sickly and unwell. Jeanie spotted me sitting on the garden wall and became concerned. For years she had worked as a Sister on a surgical hospital ward, and, recognising some worrying signs, she called for an ambulance.

Barely ten minutes later the paramedics arrived and took charge. They too were concerned and took me to the local hospital, where our ambulance joined several others already parked outside as there was no room in the Accident and Emergency department. Then my pain began!

Slowly at first, then quickly, a crushing intense pain commenced in my left arm and upper chest, fast growing in its intensity until it felt intolerable. All I wanted was for the pain to disappear, but I heard one of the paramedics say that there was nothing more that they could give me, as I had told them that for some reason I don't tolerate morphine very well.

Then I heard a knock on the ambulance door, and as it opened I heard the voice of a priest I knew well, Fr. Andrew Dawson, the Catholic chaplain at the hospital. I later discovered that my wife had by then contacted our Parish Priest, who had in turn rung Fr. Andrew. I heard him ask if I

wanted to be anointed and heard myself say "yes please".

I felt him lay his hands on my head, and immediately felt the pain ease slightly. By the time he finished giving me the sacrament of the sick, and I had been taken into the A & E department, my pain had almost gone!

During the next few days as a patient in the cardiology department of the hospital I experienced no chest pain at all, but was told that I had definitely had a heart attack. Then, several days later when I had my angiogram, I was told by the surgeon that the blocked coronary artery that had caused the heart attack had mysteriously cleared itself completely, and that my heart had suffered no serious damage. My own miracle had occurred!

Since then, I have spoken to several priests about the Sacrament of the sick, and found that they all have experienced a number of similar occasions, when miraculous healing had occurred, and that they all testify to the power of this wonderful sacrament. But that is not surprising – when the priest administers this sacrament, he does so in the person of Christ himself – and we all know that Christ healed countless people during the years of his ministry.

Sadly, many Catholics still look upon the Sacrament of the sick as the sacrament of the dying – but nothing could be further from the truth, as I am so grateful to be able to testify. It is a Sacrament of healing, one that manifests the healing power of Christ, the power He demonstrated so often during his physical time on earth. Based upon my own experience, I fail to understand why anyone would choose not to ask their priest for this Sacrament when they are suffering or in need. For me it was such a great blessing, one that I will always thank God. *Rev Deacon Bernard Farrell, Poulton Le Fylde*

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Lourdes 2024



Having recently returned from the privilege of joining the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes for the first time, Rev Deacon Stephen Pendlebury and his wife Anna from St Joseph's Church Lancaster, share with you, their experience.

We found taking part in the Masses, Eucharistic Procession, Holy Hours and Torchlight Procession deeply moving, uplifting and encouraging especially encountering such a witness of faith and love for Our Blessed Mother.

Such a wonderful experience for us too, as musicians, being able to play at all the Masses; providing music for the Mass at The Grotto of the apparitions was a really special experience and one we will never forget.

The pilgrims we met and spent time with, often shared their life stories with

us many of whom are coping daily with severe physical disabilities. The strength of their faith in such difficult situations and circumstances was humbling to encounter and a great witness to us all.

Joy and friendliness were nevertheless always in abundance with great support too from our group of young people who worked tirelessly to support those who were in wheelchairs.

Lovely to have the young ones singing for us as a group at our last night party as well as some other young and not so young 'volunteers' offering their party pieces (a certain trumpet player and his piano accompanist come to mind playing a selection of well-known pieces followed by a singalong for all!).

Lourdes is an unforgettable experience and we already look forward to returning next year. *Rev Deacon Stephen Pendlebury*

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Safeguarding

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales with the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA), has announced the news that Nazir Afzal, Chair of the CSSA, is stepping down at the conclusion of his three-year appointment.

Nazir has been instrumental in developing the CSSA in structure and function, which was recommended by an independent review of safeguarding in the Catholic Church by Ian Elliott in 2020. His work over the past three years, with

his fellow directors and operational staff, has created a robust regulatory framework for the Catholic Church in England and Wales ensuring that safeguarding standards are embedded in the life and mission of every parish, chaplaincy and religious order.

Audits of the dioceses and religious orders have taken place and have demonstrated improvements in safeguarding as integral to the Church's mission.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the President

of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales said: "Nazir Afzal has helped to establish a wider understanding of the determination of the Catholic Church in England and Wales to do everything it possibly can in its care for the vulnerable. He has played a significant part in establishing in the public eye the seriousness of our intent and the developments achieved in our work of Safeguarding. For this I thank him."

Bishop Paul Mason, the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding and a Director of the CSSA

commented: "Nazir has been instrumental in establishing CSSA as the safeguarding regulator for the Catholic Church in England and Wales. He has led the board and the executive team in developing the robust structures needed to ensure effective safeguarding practice.

"I wish him continued success in any future endeavours. The process for the recruitment of the next Chair of the CSSA will be led by the current CSSA directors. The work of the CSSA will continue in earnest whilst this process is in train." **CBCEW**

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