

FREE

The Catholic



VOICE

of Lancaster

The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 366 + February '25

INSIDE: pg04 The Diocese of Lancaster Centenary Ball



# We Are Pilgrims of Hope

## The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen

“The Holy Year is an opportunity to change our life, re-evaluate our thinking and start a new by learning from Jesus & placing our hope in God. This is the meaning of the Jubilee Pilgrimage

Pope Francis ”

“Let us pray & celebrate together in this sacred time of renewal, reflection and grace.” Pope Francis



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# The Catholic VOICE

of Lancaster



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I am delighted to introduce myself to you as the new editor of the *The Catholic Voice Lancaster*. Thanks be to God for such a lovely blessing and timely opportunity to be part of a wonderful team serving our Catholic community, across the Lancaster Diocese.

What a great honour to be following in the iconic footsteps of the legendary Edwina Gillett, who has been such a wonderful editor and a diligent distributor of both the newspaper & the Catholic faith. Through her wide knowledge, extensive know how and know "who", Edwina has seamlessly and successfully informed, inspired and educated us all, for over 18 years, with a veritable encyclopaedia of colourful Catholic life, in all our Lancashire parishes. Edwina has been a faithful, dedicated and passionate advocate for her faith and may God Bless her abundant talent for sharing her gift of communication.

On behalf of all the new team here, I would like to thank you Edwina, for your incredible legacy and we wish you a happy, blessed and peaceful retirement.

It is a great privilege to be part of the new team here and I thank Bishop Paul Swarbrick for this unique opportunity.

Please say hello to the new dynamic editorial and distribution team if you see them out and about.

Welcome Francis Wygladala, one of Lancshires top Catholic faith and education professionals and her husband, Andrew Wygladala, joining with his vast experience in media and broadcasting.

We are most delighted to welcome Father Stephen Pearson, parish priest at Holy Family Catholic Church, Freckleton, as our Ecclesiastical Advisor, offering invaluable faith based advice and knowledge.

*The Catholic Voice Lancaster* holds a special place in my heart, as I have always enjoyed reading all about the different aspects of

# Happy New Year, Jubilee & Centenary Greetings



Outgoing Catholic Voice Editor Edwina Gillett, hands over the role of editor to Pearl Mina.

parish life. Please do continue to share your pictures, what's on around the parishes, stories, good news, faith journeys and pilgrimages.

With two very special events happening in 2025 - the **Jubilee** and the **Centenary** of the Lancaster Diocese Celebrations, there will be plenty of faith filled activities, Catholic themed special events, pilgrimages, plenary indulgences, special masses & prayers, gatherings and celebrations - so it's a new era and new time to embrace and share the good news together, in many different ways. These are once in a lifetime events and a rare opportunity for Catholics in our local communities to embrace and enjoy.

It's a good time to be involved in your parish, stand up and walk with Jesus Christ and celebrate in friendship, love and hope. Together we will use **our voices** so that God can hear us and bless us during this special time. So make the *Catholic Voice* your own Voice this year and rejoice & be part of it!

As the Holy Doors are opened, we can be open to God's word, his way and his wonder all around us.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, it is my hope that you open your hearts, open your mind, open your imagination to think of new ways to bring Jesus Christ closer to your life & share your experiences here. Thanks be to God. *Pearl Mina, Editor*

## Meet The New Team



**1/ Andrew Wygladala**  
I was born in Blackpool in the 1960s and educated at Upholland and Ushaw until I was 21. After leaving, I met my wife Fran, and we married and settled in Preston. I've always had a passion for broadcasting and media, spending several years working with the religious team at Red Rose Radio, where I produced a weekly magazine program. My career has been largely in IT, and I enjoy marketing, copywriting, and website management.

Now, I'm excited to be able to put these skills to good use alongside the team here at the *Catholic Voice*. My "go to" Saint is John the Evangelist as his Gospel is an inspiration!!!

**2/ Frances Wygladala**  
Born in Yorkshire and moved to Lancashire when I started teaching and settled in Preston when I married Andrew. I am

passionate about Catholic education and have spent my time working in the diocese since the mid-eighties in various roles from teacher, headteacher, governor, inspector and adviser. I love music, both playing and listening to it, but there's no better way to spend an afternoon or evening than at a live performance. We love walking every day with our dog and are sometimes joined by our son, family and friends - our favourite place is the beach!

My work takes me across the whole diocese and I look forward to celebrating the wonderful work of the Church in our very own publication - *The Catholic Voice*.

My 'go to' saints St Rita and St Jude from my parents, patron saints of the impossible and lost causes - need I say any more?

**3/ Pearl Mina**  
I do like to be beside the seaside, as a

Sandgrown'un born in sunny Blackpool and baptised in the beautiful Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Blackpool.

I have been blessed to travel all over the world with my career in the media & communication industry working in film, TV, radio & social media.

My true talent and passion is being an ambassador of Jesus Christ and championing the Catholic faith throughout my media work and all walks of life, travels and creative work. Basically a PR for God and all things heavenly.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is my go to friend in prayer as well as Holy Mary, Mother of God, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, St Joseph, St Jude and St Michael The Archangel, Archangels Raphael and Gabriel - as my daily hour of power prayer team and heavenly illumination. *Let there be light!*



# Opening of the Jubilee Year 2025

At the request of the Pope, in every Catholic cathedral across the world, the Holy Year for 2025 was officially opened at Lancaster Cathedral on Sunday 29th December, on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph.

Bishop Paul inaugurated the Holy Year with holy mass at Lancaster Cathedral, beginning with a short ceremony at the cathedral doors. Over 200 parishioners representing parishes from all over the Diocese gathered together in prayer and thanksgiving as Bishop Paul banged three times on the cathedral door with his crozier.

The doors opened and a fanfare sounded as the bishop, clergy, and servers led a historic procession, followed by the people through the doors and into the cathedral. The imprint from the crozier impacted the door and left behind three circular marks, of which Bishop Paul reflected that they “Symbolised the three wounds of Jesus Christ.”

**Blessed be the Lord our Hope – May your love be upon us Lord as we place all our hope in you.**

(Left) Bishop Paul leads the faithful at the opening of the Jubilee Year 2025. The three knocks indent in which Bishop Paul reflected that they symbolised the three wounds of Jesus Christ.

## New Year, New Beginnings, New Blessings



Is it too late to wish you all well for the New Year?! I don't think so. Like all years, it will be something of a 'mixed bag'. Already I know of several people who have not enjoyed the best of starts, and then there is all the stuff going on around the world that seems so desperately sad. It never goes away, always there to disturb us.

You will know that this year is a year of Jubilee, with the theme: 'Pilgrims of Hope.' Pope Francis calls us all to be those pilgrims. Hope is based not on our own efforts and plans. It is based on, and found in, the person of Jesus Christ. He is our Hope. Let's start with that truth, and let it be a consolation, an encouragement that builds us up.

I am grateful to Edwina Gillett for her time as Editor of the *Catholic Voice*. At the end of 2024 she stepped down from this role after 18 years.

The standard of her work has been recognised nationally to be of the highest quality. With her retirement from post, some have questioned the relevance of a 'paper' in these digital times. Evidence suggests clearly that it still has a valuable place. With that clearly in mind, I am delighted that a small group of willing enthusiasts have agreed to pick up the mantle Edwina has worn for so long. Edwina has worked with them to ensure a smooth hand-over. I express my gratitude on behalf of the Diocese to Fr. Tony Walsh for this time as Ecclesiastical Advisor and to the new Editorial Board members:

- Pearl Mina – Editor
- Fr. Stephen Pearson – Ecclesiastical Advisor
- Frances Wygladala – Assistant Editor & Distribution
- Andrew Wygladala – Distribution

As we progress into this Jubilee year, and as we include celebrations of the Diocesan Centenary, there should be a great deal of attractive content in future issues. May we be blessed by having parishioners help distribute the Voice locally.



With my blessing,  
+ Paul  
Rt Rev Paul Swarbrick  
Bishop of Lancaster



See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:18-19

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# The Diocese of Lancaster Centenary Ball

**M**ore than 3 years ago in November 2021, at the end of a rollercoaster of a year, I was having a Whatsapp conversation with my friend Sarah, lamenting the lack of catholic black-tie events, when she first floated the idea of a diocesan ball. The two of us, along with two other friends and our spouses, had founded Mission Lancaster in 2019, with the goal of running prayer and faith formation events like Radiant. This time, however, we felt the Diocese needed an opportunity to simply celebrate. The idea must have taken hold and over the coming months, and into 2022, we pondered long and hard about where, when, and how we could make it happen. Then, as is so often the case, life happened, in this case quite literally, as we both found out we were expecting, and ball planning got put on hold.

In February 2024, just as the babies turned one, the subject of the ball rose again, this time with an occasion to celebrate – the 100 year anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Lancaster. Wanting it to be a truly diocesan event we started to look for a venue that would be fairly central to the geography of our sprawling diocese and this time everything started to line up; an open day at the Villa, Levens, the following weekend meant we could go and check out the facilities, and we learned that the deposit we would need to put down for the event was the exact amount that we had been holding since Radiant in November 2019. We secured a date near the start of the Centenary year and trusted that it

wasn't just our small group of friends who would like an opportunity to get dressed up and celebrate our faith and community in more style than we are accustomed to.

As the months passed the organisation began in earnest; how to ticket the event, meal and drinks packages from the venue, entertainment for the evening, posters, social media posts, room and table decor – all with very little idea of how many guests we would be able to persuade to join us!

Special credit to the priests and parishioners who bought tables back in September that gave us the courage to press on with the preparations.

By December when ticket sales closed we were delighted not only with the number of people joining us for the ball, but also the huge variety of both ages and locations that we had coming.

The Diocese was truly represented – families, laity both young and old, clergy, and of course our dear Bishop Paul.

We had parish groups from Workington, Lytham, Preston and Kendal, and friends from Carlisle, Keswick, Garstang, Barrow, Lancaster, Whitehaven – and Illinois.

We were sure that the event would be a success. On the evening of the ball, all the planning paid off.

As we set the menus and centerpieces on the beautifully arranged tables, the room felt ready for a celebration. We were excited

to share this milestone with so many members of our diocesan family.

At 6:00pm, after months of preparation, we welcomed our guests with a glass of festive fizz. Our talented pianist, Matt Swainsbury, set the mood with a blend of both his own music and guest requests, providing a wonderful soundtrack for the evening's socializing. A brief history of the Diocesan Bishops played on a screen for those interested, and guests found a Centenary pin badge waiting at their places, a memento of the event. It was heartwarming to see these pins adorning so many lapels as the night wore on.

After grace, led by Bishop Paul, dinner was served. The Villa provided exceptional service and delicious food, and the atmosphere was one of pure enjoyment and fellowship. As the three-course meal progressed, the hours flew by. We concluded the meal with the Diocesan Centenary Prayer, and everyone joined in singing the hymn Hail, Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star, before listening to Fr. Andrew Allman's after-dinner address.

Fr. Allman, currently on Christmas break from his role as Vice-Rector at Oscott Seminary, gave an inspiring talk, reflecting on the geographical reach of the Diocese and the many roles and organizations that contribute to its vitality. His words reminded us of the hope and appreciation that bind us all as one Diocese.

As the evening continued, guests enjoyed tea and coffee, along with Ferrero Rocher

chocolates—courtesy of Fr. Allman, who encouraged everyone to pray a Hail Mary for the Diocese with each future chocolate enjoyed. The final part of the evening was filled with dancing. Canon Alf Hayes and his band, The Jags, provided lively music that had the dance floor packed from the very first song.

The night was so enjoyable that as the midnight hour approached, we had to reluctantly encourage the final few guests to leave, as the Villa needed to begin its clean-up. The smiles on everyone's faces as they departed spoke volumes about the success of the evening.

In truth, the real thanks go to our guests. It was an absolute joy to welcome so many parishioners from all corners of the Diocese—some of whom had traveled long distances to be there. Because of the vast geography of our Diocese, it's rare that we get to come together with those from other parishes, and this ball demonstrated the beauty of our shared faith and community.

Praise God for this wonderful Diocese, for all it has done and continues to do, and praise God for its people, who find in it something worth having and something worth celebrating.

And, while two months ago I swore I would never organize another event, the Lord has a funny way of making us eat our words. Before the night was even over, I was already hearing murmurs about doing it again soon. We'll see! *Rosey Fetherston*





**David Pope** dip FD MBIFD

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**O**n Thursday 5th December, the St Mary's school choir proudly represented their school at the Deanery Advent Service held at St John Vianney's Church. The service, themed "Prayers of the Nativity", marked the conclusion of the Year of Prayer. Each participating school contributed reflections, music, dance, or drama related to their given topic.

St Mary's Catholic Academy choir delivered a stunning rendition of a traditional Christmas carol with a unique twist. Their moving performance culminated in an unaccompanied final verse, where their incredible harmonies, tone, and passion brought a tear to many eyes in the congregation.

In addition to the beautiful music, a collection was held for the DEC Middle East Appeal, raising an impressive

£101.28. Laura Higgins, choir mistress was incredibly proud of the choir and said:

*"I would like to say a huge thank you to all who contributed to this important cause. We are so grateful to the parents and families who continue to support our choir and make these moments possible."*

The choir continued to delight the local community on Tuesday, 10th December, as a selected number of performers joined forces with Blackpool Music Services to perform in their annual Christmas Carol Concert at the prestigious Winter Gardens Theatre in Blackpool. The iconic event, brought together the whole community to celebrate the joy of Christmas through music.

Laura was delighted with the success:

# Heartfelt Performances by St Mary's Catholic Academy Choir bring Christmas Joy to the world

*"Our students were outstanding, singing in perfect harmony and representing the St Mary's Catholic academy with pride. Their hard work and dedication shone through every note, leaving the audience mesmerised. A highlight of the evening was a special mention from the Rt Hon Mayor of Blackpool Councillor Peter Peter Hunter, who praised the students' rendition of 'O Holy Night' as the most beautiful he has ever heard. Such recognition is a testament to their talent and commitment."*

*We are incredibly proud of our students for their wonderful performance and for embodying the spirit of Christmas so perfectly.*

*We would like to give a big thank you to Blackpool Music Services for organising such a magical event and to everyone who supported our students on this special evening."*

The choir continued their musical journey

with a beautiful Christmas Carol Concert On Thursday 19th December, at St Mary's Catholic Academy in which family, friends, governors, staff and members of the public gathered in the Chapel for their annual Carol Service.

The choir sang beautifully and the Pupil Chaplains led the readings and drama performances, prayers and reflection perfectly.

A wonderful festive time was had by all, and many remarked afterwards how lovely it was to spend some time preparing for Christmas, reflecting and having a moment of quiet in the middle of a hectic period.

Laura Higgins said: *"We are so grateful to all who helped, supported, contributed and attended these very special evenings and to the hard working pupils in the choir, their dedication, talent and heavenly singing is a credit to the school."*

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## St John's Catholic Primary School liturgy celebrations

**O**n Friday 27th September, St John's Catholic Primary School in Poulton-le-Fylde hosted a shared liturgy morning with groups of children and staff from Catholic Blackpool primary schools Holy Family, Christ The King, St Kentigern's, St Bernadette's, St Teresa's and St John Vianney.

The pupils were also joined by groups of older pupils and chaplains from St Mary's Catholic Academy, Blackpool and Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood. In total, there were more than fifty children and staff in attendance. The morning began with Mass at St John's Church.

Fr Peter Sharrock provided a very warm welcome to all our visitors. He spoke of the importance of the children getting to know Jesus. Our final hymn, "Shine

Jesus Shine" was an excellent way to begin the next part of the morning. Following Mass, we all spent some time exploring the parish garden in the late September sunshine. The children from St John's led bidding prayers around the statue of Mary.

The children collaborated wonderfully and planned a range of thoughtful liturgies with themes including love, compassion and tolerance. The morning ended with a liturgy on the theme of service led by Francesca Muldoon and Lucia Higgs from St John's. This was a special moment and a lovely way to end a hugely successful and happy morning.

Well done to all the staff and children involved.  
*Paul McGrath, Deputy Headteacher  
St John's Catholic Primary School.*



# Catenian Public Speaking Competition Now Open!



Photo of last years winners

One of the UK's most prestigious public speaking contests for pupils of Catholic schools and sixth forms has announced its forthcoming date for application.

**The Catenian Public Speaking Competition 2025**

Is to be held on 23rd March 2025 at Sacred Heart Catholic High School Fenham Hall Drive, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 9YH. 1.30pm arrival for 2.00pm start.

Indications of interest, required right away, from schools and colleges for

pupils at Key Stages 3, 4 and post 16 to Joe James at [jjames9241@aol.com](mailto:jjames9241@aol.com)

Year 6 pupils can represent the Trusts to which their schools belong, and previously The Nicholas Postgate Academy, Bishop Wilkinson Trust and the Bishop Bewick Trust have partaken.

Indications of interest to be received as soon as possible.

**One of the major objectives of the Catenian Association is to support Catholic youth**

It does this in a number of ways, through

its Bursary Fund which supports young people engaged in projects in the third world, working with Catholic Societies in a number of Universities and through its sponsorship of the Catenian Public Speaking Competition.

The Public Speaking Competition is held annually with regional heats being held in each of the eighteen Catenian Provinces, with the aim of developing the participants self confidence and presentational skills.

Drawing on candidates from Aberdeen to Guernsey past participants include at

least one current BBC News presenter and a well known British actor.

The winning candidate from each Province goes forward to a final which is held in Manchester each September.

All participants receive a cash award and the top three receive enhanced cash rewards for themselves and their school or college.

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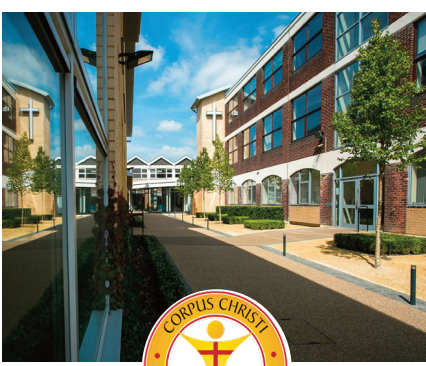

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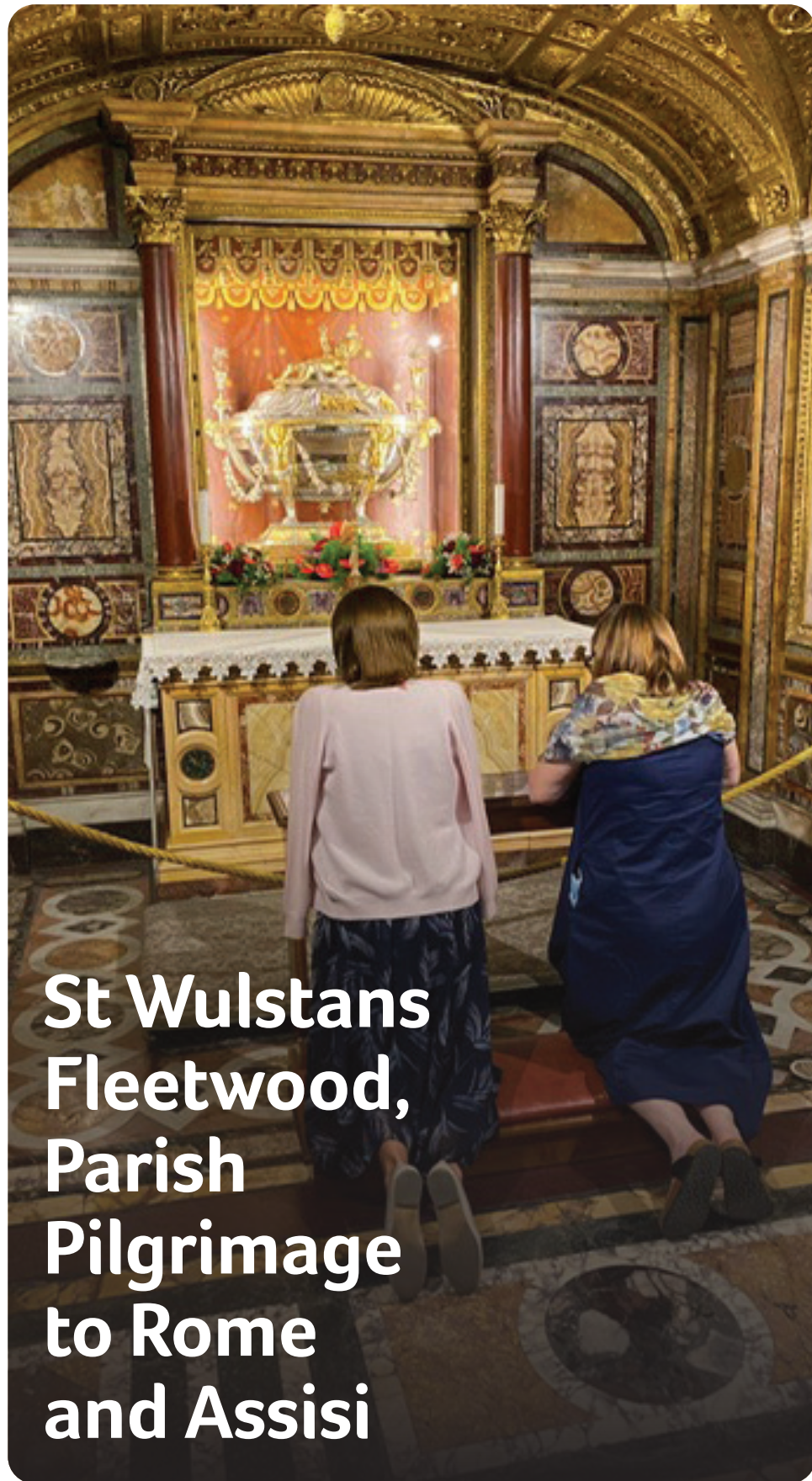


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## St Wulstans Fleetwood, Parish Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi

**T**owards the end of September, parishioners from St Wulstan's in Fleetwood joined their now retired parish priest, Canon Alf Hayes, in a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi. A lot of the pilgrims had previously travelled together – to The Holy Land in 2022 and Krakow in 2023- so the camaraderie and good humour was much in evidence from the outset.

To say that Rome is busily preparing for the jubilee year of hope would be an understatement as many places are being spruced up for the hordes expected next year. We were fortunate to be able to visit many of the holy places on every pilgrim's itinerary who visits the eternal city and to have Mass celebrated by Fr Alf in some wonderful churches.

As well as St Peter's Basilica and optional visits to the Sistine chapel and Vatican museum, there were visits arranged to

the Papal basilica of St John Lateran, St Mary Major and the church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help which houses the famous original painting. We also visited St Paul's Basilica and the Basilica of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva.

The highlight of the visit to Rome was, of course, the Mass in St Peter's Square celebrated on the feast of the Guardian Angels by Pope Francis. We had an excellent view as he made his way around the square afterwards in the Pope Mobile amid a lively cheering atmosphere.

It was just after this wonderful Mass that we departed Rome for Assisi.

After glorious weather in Rome we found ourselves in a very damp Assisi but it didn't dampen our spirits because Assisi on the feast of St Francis is indeed a sight to behold as everyone heads there and the atmosphere is joyous.

We did indeed feel honoured to be able to have our English Mass celebrated in the lower basilica of St Francis on his Feast day in Assisi. We also had the opportunity to visit the monastery of San Damiano, which was the first monastery of the order of St Clare.

A good number of us had been hoping to visit the mortal remains of fifteen year old Blessed Carlo Acutis. His body lies in a glass coffin in the Renunciation Chapel in Assisi. This young boy's devotion to The Blessed Sacrament makes him a truly inspirational saint of our times.

For Carlo, the Eucharist and the Virgin Mary were the two pillars on which every Christian should build their life. His "programme of life" – "Always united to Jesus" – was inspired by St John Paul II's motto – *Totus Tuus (All Yours)*. He was a computer wizard who used his internet skills for the good of souls and to record

Eucharistic Miracles. In September 2006, before his return to his studies in Milan, Carlo visited the tomb of St Francis in Assisi, as was his custom, to seek the intercession of St Francis for the year ahead. Strangely, the basilica was closed. Before mid October, he was to read that as a sign, that St Francis was waiting for him in heaven.

Mgr. Anthony Figueiredo, the writer of the book, "*Blessed Carlo Acutis- Five Steps to Sainthood*" gave us a talk about this remarkable boy and signed copies of his book.

The jubilee year of hope will see the canonisation of Blessed Carlo Acutis by Pope Francis An example to young people and a witness of mercy to the poor.

Copies of the book by Monsignor Anthony can be obtained from "*Aid to the Church in Need.*" Jenny Philips



# As part of the Diocese Centenary Celebrations *The Pilgrims of Grace Tour* launches alongside a new history and art competition - *Get involved!*

**The centenary of the Diocese will be celebrated in all Catholic schools this February with the launch of a Centenary Statue Tour of Our Lady of Lourdes.**

Centenary Statue Tour begins on Our Lady of Lourdes feast day on 11th February 2025. This special initiative celebrates 100 years of the Diocese, under the protection and patronage of Our Lady of Lourdes, with three statues visiting every Catholic school in the Diocese of Lancaster.

There will be three statues travelling around Cumbria, Lancaster and Preston and The Fylde Coast primary and secondary schools.

Organised by the Lancaster Diocesan Education Service the special Pilgrimage of Grace will include:

- Liturgies and celebration ideas to mark the arrival of the statue.
- A Pilgrimage Diary Book, to record activities, reflections, and include photos of the celebrations.

This is a wonderful opportunity to deepen devotion and unity across our schools, parishes and the whole diocese.

The tour will culminate in October with representatives from all schools gathering at one of three diocesan sites: St. Mary's, Cleator; St. Mary's, Ladyewell; and the Sacred Heart, Blackpool.

## Jubilee Mass

After the Statue Tour there will be a mass of thanksgiving for the history and work of the Mission in our schools. At this Mass, the leaders of the Education Trust families will bring their statues of Our Lady for a formal blessing of both their statue and the faithful work of our Catholic schools.

This will take place at Lancaster Cathedral and all those in reserved posts throughout the Diocese - Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, Heads of RE, Chaplains and Chairs of Governors and Directors will be invited attend.

**Save The Date: This will take place at Lancaster Cathedral on 6th November, 2025.**

## Centenary History Project

The Centenary History Project is an exciting project that will encourage schools to begin historical investigations and

research key themes to explore and inspire imaginative ideas for presenting each school's unique story and heritage. Using creativity and insight pupils can document their school's history, and this information will eventually go towards building a Centenary Library that celebrates the rich heritage of our diocesan schools through the eyes of those who are shaping the future.

## Can you help your school begin its historical investigation?

It would be an incredible opportunity to see the creativity and insight of pupils and students, documenting their school's history. If you have any old photos of when you were at school, or any interesting artefacts, please contact your local schools and get involved.

All age groups are welcome and it's a multigenerational project that will be a fantastic historical record for the future.

## Jubilee Art Competition

The Jubilee of Hope Art Competition has been launched across all primary and secondary Catholic school across Lancashire. This exciting creative competition offers pupils and adults connected to our Catholic schools the chance to create a stunning piece of art, inspired by the Jubilee themes. There will be a special prize-giving ceremony with Bishop Paul in July. Don't miss the wonderful opportunity to celebrate the Jubilee, and showcase the talent in your school.

The competition will run from January through to the end of the Spring Term, with winners announced in May and a prize-giving event with Bishop Paul in Lancaster in June, after the half-term break.

The judging panel, including a local artist, will select three prize-winners from each Key Stage, from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 5.

Additionally, there will be a special category for entries from school staff, families, and carers. So all ages are welcome to take part in the art!

A commemorative booklet featuring all the winning entries will be produced, with copies provided to each prize-winner and distributed to all our schools and colleges.

If you would like your school to take part, or are an individual who would like to join in, please email Jackie Broadley, project co-ordinator for the Lancaster Diocesan Education Service: [jackie.broadley@lrcd.org.uk](mailto:jackie.broadley@lrcd.org.uk)



## Carlos Acutis

Pope Francis said he will canonize Carlo Acutis next April, setting the eagerly awaited date for the late teenager to become the Catholic Church's first millennial and digital saint. Pope Francis, said he would proclaim the church's youngest contemporary saint during the Jubilee of Adolescents at the Vatican on April 25-27.



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## St Stephen's Guild welcomes four new altar servers at St Mary's Fernyhalgh

On the First Sunday of Advent four Altar Servers from St. Mary's Fernyhalgh were enrolled into the Guild of St. Stephen by Fr. Augustine assisted by Ian Mulholland, Diocesan Director of the Archconfraternity of St. Stephen.

After Mass special refreshments were put on to thank them for their loyal service at the Altar.

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## The Meaning behind the Jubilee Logo

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**The logo of the Jubilee is a symbol of hope and fraternity that will guide us in the faith pilgrimage of the Holy Year. It is an image rich in symbolism, representing the central themes of the Holy Year: hope, mercy, and fraternity.**

The logo chosen for the Holy Year depicts four stylized and graceful figures, in four colours that recall the shades of the rainbow: red, orange, green, and blue.

The choice of colours is not random, just as the colour of sacred vestments throughout the liturgical year is not.

**Red** symbolizes love, passion, and

self-sacrifice, Christ's sacrifice and His boundless love for humanity, but also the fire of the Holy Spirit and His strength that animates Christians.

**Orange** expresses joy, vitality, and enthusiasm, the light that illuminates the path of faith.

**Green** is universally recognized as the colour of hope, growth, and rebirth.

**Blue**, finally, symbolizes faith, peace, and tranquillity, evoking the sky and spirituality, and inviting contemplation and prayer.

The four figures represent humanity a whole, in its differences and similarities. They proceed to embrace each other, expressing the solidarity and brotherhood that should unite the peoples of the world.

Leading them is the red figure, clinging to a Cross formed by a black curve that ends, at the bottom, with an anchor. The Cross is not rigid, not static, but bends towards humanity as if to embrace it.

As for the anchor, Monsignor Fisichella,

pro prefect of the Dicastery of Evangelization explained its meaning:

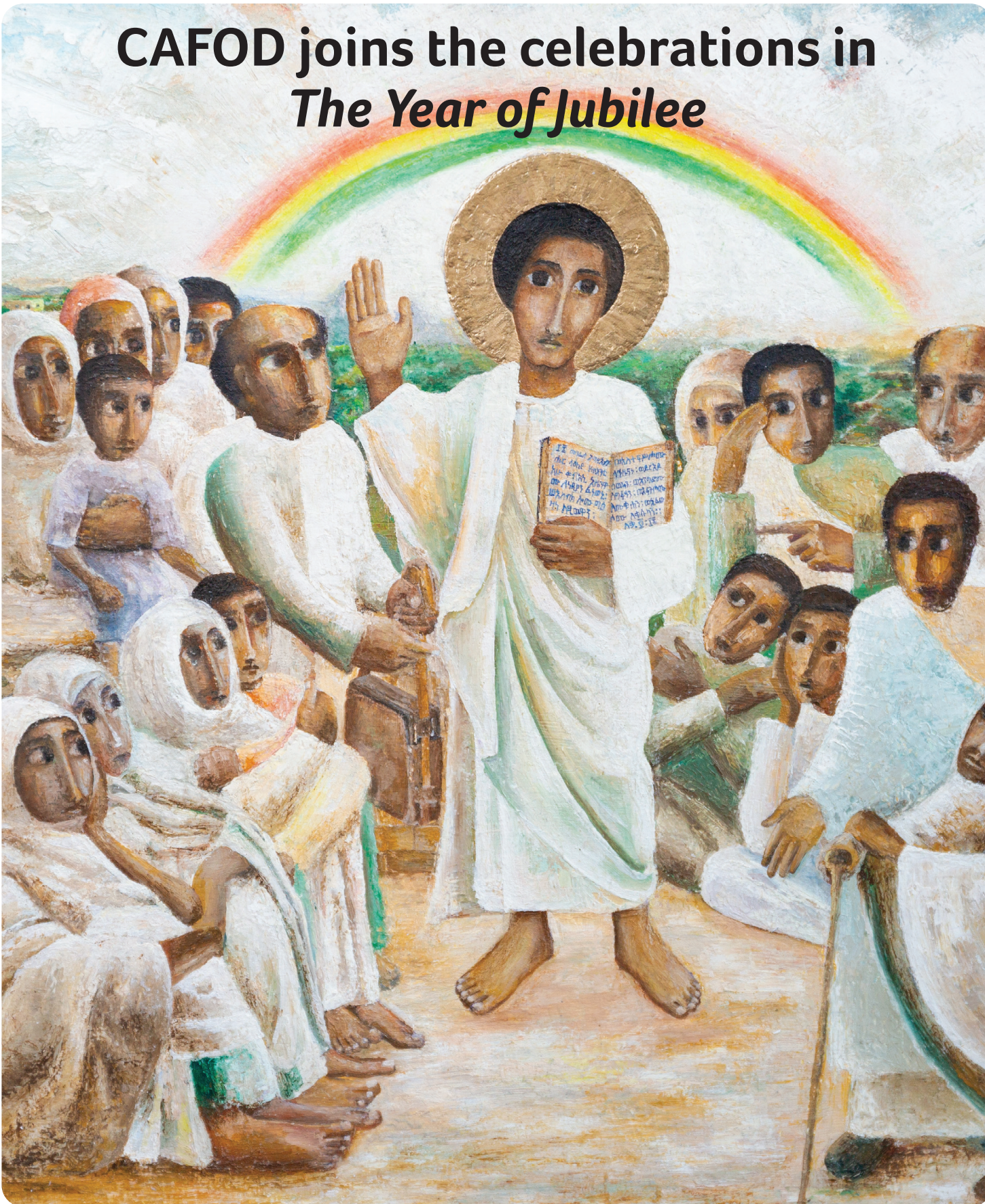
*"As is known, the anchor has often been used as a metaphor for hope. The anchor of hope is the name given in seafaring jargon to the reserve anchor, used by vessels to perform emergency manoeuvres to stabilize the ship during storms."*

The sense of this symbol in the Jubilee logo is clear: it is precisely in the most difficult moments that we need to rely on an anchor that gives us security and guarantees salvation, and what better anchor than the Cross, a symbol of Christ and His infinite love for all of us? The presence of small agitated waves at the bottom of the logo confirms the existence of dangers and obstacles, of those personal events and events of the world that make each of our lives not always easy.

Thus, the logo in its entirety takes on a clear meaning, and the Jubilee, with its twelve months of ceremonies and initiatives, becomes a long pilgrimage to be undertaken together, as brothers, towards salvation, guided by the Cross and the hope of salvation promised by God.



# CAFOD joins the celebrations in The Year of Jubilee



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would like to hear from you!

If your parish or school has any news or if you would personally like to submit an article for publication, please send us what you have. Contact details can be found on page 2.

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In the Old Testament, the Jubilee Year was a time of renewal, freedom and celebration: Debts were cancelled, people and the land could rest, prisoners and slaves were freed, and land was given to those who didn't have any. It was known as the year of the Lord's favour.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

Jesus makes it clear that his mission is to bring the justice and freedom of the Jubilee and we are called to share in his mission.

At CAFOD, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, this mission of Jesus is at the heart of what we do.

**How can we be Pilgrims of Hope this year?**

1 Use our reflection guide to explore the biblical background to the Jubilee Year, be encouraged by stories of change and reflect on God's call for you in this special year. For use in groups, as a church or individually.

2 As we begin the Jubilee Year 2025, we face the most acute global debt crisis in history. Pope Francis has called for action on the debt crisis this year, saying it is a "matter of justice." Sign the global petition calling for action at [cafod.org.uk/campaign](http://cafod.org.uk/campaign)

3 You can make a huge difference to people living in poverty this Jubilee Year by giving a regular gift to CAFOD. Support us and our partners across the world, working wherever the need is greatest. [cafod.org.uk/give](http://cafod.org.uk/give)

4 Lend a hand. The Jubilee is a great time to lend us a hand with our work in your parish, local schools or in various other ways. Your help can bring communities together, raise awareness and bear fruit for the Kingdom of God. [cafod.org.uk/volunteer](http://cafod.org.uk/volunteer)

All our Jubilee resources for the Jubilee can be found at: [cafod.org.uk/jubilee](http://cafod.org.uk/jubilee)



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# Canon Bob Horn R.I.P.



**Canon Bob Horn's life was spent serving in parishes in Preston and Blackpool, teaching Philosophy at the English College in Valladolid and outwitting the Shining Path terrorists, serving the mission in Peru with the Society of St James for a decade during the troubles. May he rest in peace, good and faithful servant.**

**The funeral and Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of much loved parish priest Canon Bob Horn, was held on Thursday 12th December at Our Lady & St. Edwards RC Church.**

Fondly remembered as parish priest at Christ The King Catholic Church Blackpool, Canon Bob Horn died on Sunday afternoon 24th November 2024 at 3pm on the Feast of Christ the King.

Canon Bob had been cared for at the Stella Matutina Care Home in Lytham St Annes for the last few months.

Director of the Diocese of Lourdes Pilgrimages Linda Wisdom said of his passing: "Canon Bob attended the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes for many years. He was truly loved by all pilgrims, his kindness and care for the sick and dying was an honour to witness.

*He had such a gentle way with all pilgrims and*

*his attention and catechesis with the youth was amazing. Due to failing health he had not been able to travel with us the last few years, and he has been very much missed.*

*May he rest in peace and rise in Glory with the Lord. Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for him St Bernadette, pray for him."*

Rev Canon Bob Horn – Dearly loved son, brother and parish priest. Of your charity pray for the repose of the soul of Robert who died fortified by rites of the Holy Church on Sunday 24th November, aged 85 years.

The full obituary and story of Canon Bob Horn's life in the parishes in next months Catholic Voice.







# Father Alf Parker R.I.P.

**Please remember in your prayers, the repose of the soul of Fr Alf Parker, born and bred in Workington, who gave up a promising Rugby career, playing for the Under 19s England team, to follow the Lord.**

**The funeral and requiem mass of Father Alf Parker was held at Boarbank Chapel, Boarbank Hall on 29th November.**

Father (William) Alf Parker was Parish Priest of St Charles Borromeo, Grange-over-Sands from 2000, St Andrew, Cottam from 1996 – 2000 and Holy Trinity and St George, Kendal from 1983 – 1996. Prior to this he was Assistant Priest in English Martyrs, Preston from 1982 – 1983, St Edward, Windsor in 1965, Holy Ghost, Crowthorne, Berkshire from 1964 – 1965 and the Cathedral in Portsmouth in 1964.

of Priests from 2009 and on the teaching staff at Underley Hall from 1965 – 1975 and St Joseph's College and St Mary's RC High School, Blackpool from 1975 – 1982. He was ordained a priest in Workington in 1964.

Joyful to the end, may he now find eternal rest in the Lord, and may he rest in peace.

A full obituary and story of his life and service will follow in the next edition of the *Catholic Voice*.

Fr Parker held additional appointments for Sick and Retired Priests, the Council



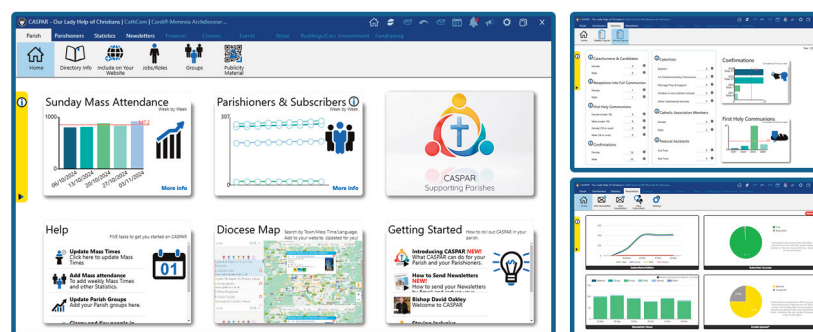
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# CAFOD's Lent Appeal: Build hope and a safety net for the future



Lokho and her children.



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**T**his Lent, we will mark CAFOD's Family Fast Day on Friday 14 March – a day when we have an opportunity to share hope with our sisters and brothers around the world through our fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

In his decree for the Jubilee Year 2025, "Hope does not disappoint", Pope Francis reminds us of the theological virtues – faith, hope, and charity – at the heart of Christian life. He tells us that Christian "hope perseveres in the midst of trials: founded on faith and nurtured by charity, it enables us to press forward in life."

This Lent, CAFOD invites Catholic parishioners across Lancaster Diocese to embody these virtues by supporting the Lent appeal in Family Fast Day collections or by giving online ([cafod.org.uk/envelope](http://cafod.org.uk/envelope)).

The Lent Appeal demonstrates the power of hope in action through the story of Lokho, a farmer and mother in northern Kenya. For nearly four years, her community experienced an unrelenting drought and was supported by CAFOD during the East Africa food crisis. Livestock perished, crops failed, and Lokho was left with no means to provide for her children. Yet, amidst this trial, hope persevered, nurtured by the faith and charity of her neighbour, who shared what they had with each other to survive.

Supported by CAFOD and local Caritas expert Wakera, Lokho and her community found strength in unity. With training, tools, and seeds funded by donations

from parishioners in England and Wales, they planted kitchen gardens.

Innovative shade nets protected the plants from the harsh sun while allowing rain to nurture the young crops. Now, Lokho not only feeds her family but also sells the extraproduce, saving money and ensuring a safety net for future climate challenges.

In this Jubilee Year, Pope Francis has invited us to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind.

Our parishes in Lancaster Diocese can respond to the Pope's call by holding a collection for the Lent Appeal, supporting local experts to provide effective solutions to the biggest problems facing people all around the world. Our schools and parishes in Lancaster Diocese can also support our sisters and brothers around the world by taking part in CAFOD's Big Lent Walk, an opportunity to join in a symbolic pilgrimage of solidarity and hope during this Jubilee year.

The money you raise by taking part in the Big Lent Walk helps CAFOD support families in extreme poverty around the world. Find out more here: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/>

Thank you for your prayers and generous support. Together, we are reaching out to the most excluded across the globe, offering a light of hope and giving them the help and support they need.



## Dates for your Diary

Sunday 2nd February

**Candlemas Day**

*Feast of The Presentation of The Lord*

Monday 3rd February

**St Blaise Feast Day**

*Blessing of The Throat*

Saturday 8th February

**St Josephine Bakhita**

Tuesday 11th February

**Feast Day of Our Lady Of Lourdes**

Wednesday 5th March

**Ash Wednesday**

*Beginning of Lent*



## Our Lady of Lourdes

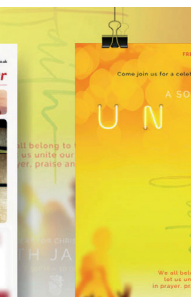
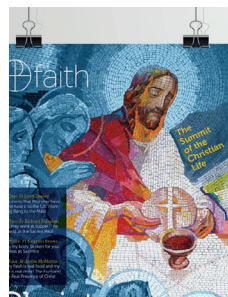
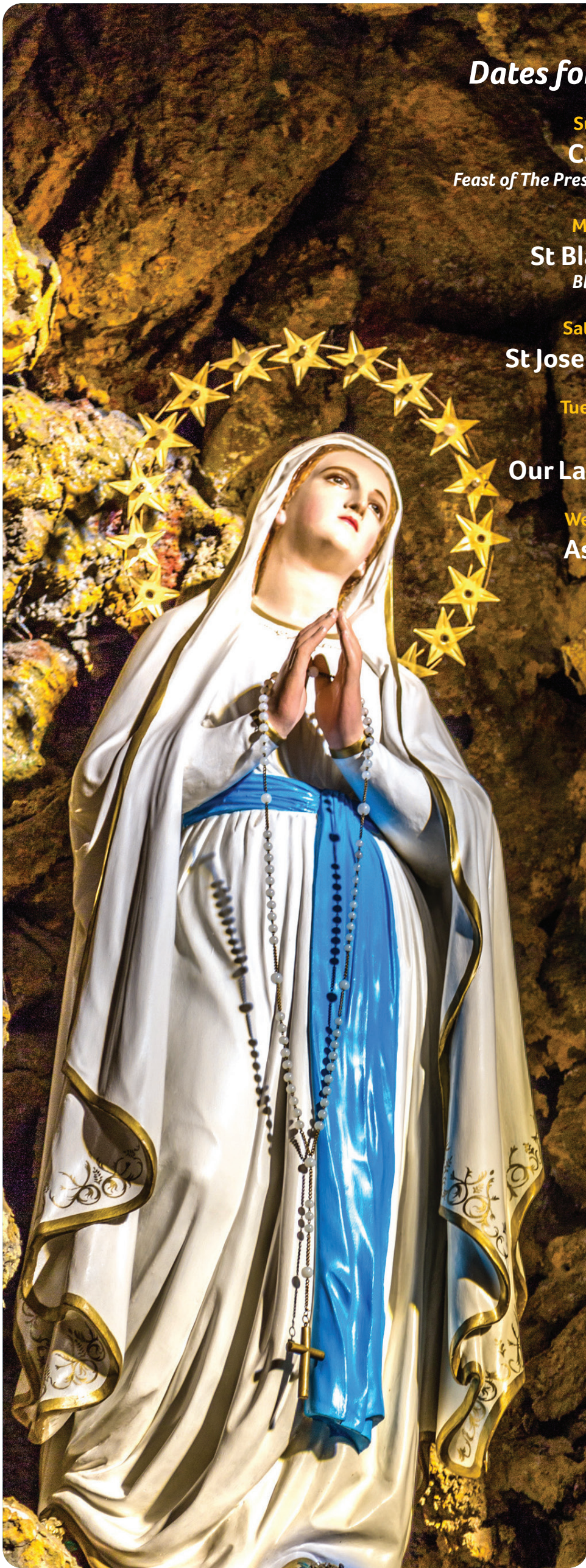
### Feast Day Prayer

*Ever Immaculate Virgin Mother of Mercy, Health of the sick, refuge of sinners, Comforter of the afflicted, you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings; look with mercy on me.*

*By appearing in the Grotto of Lourdes, you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary, whence you dispense your favors; and already many sufferers have obtained the cure for their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal.*

*I come, therefore, with complete confidence to implore your maternal intercession. Obtain, O loving Mother, the grant of my requests. Through gratitude for your favors, I will endeavor to imitate your virtues, that I may one day share your glory.*

**Amen.**



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# Spring retreats at The Christian Heritage Centre, Stonyhurst - time to renew in the peaceful Ribble Valley

**T**he priesthood today faces a duplicate challenge: that of the priest's identity before a secular world, and that of adequately understanding masculinity in a post-modern society.

*"I became your Father, in Jesus Christ, through the Gospel."*

**The Fatherhood of the Priest clergy retreat, 28 April – 2 May 2025**

Fr Jose Granados, Superior General of the Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and Vice-President emeritus of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies in Marriage and Family Life, will preach the new spring clergy retreat. Fr Granados will address two, intertwined questions that are at the heart of priestly identity: masculinity and spiritual paternity.

As a widely respected sacramental theologian, a consultant to multiple Vatican dicasteries, author of numerous articles and volumes, as well as an experienced pastor and formator, this is a unique opportunity to engage with a theme of fundamental importance to priesthood.

For more information and to book: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/the-fatherhood-of-the-priest/>



**Mens' Spiritual Exercises**  
**31 March – 5 April 2025**

A 5-day version of the Ignatian Exercises offered specifically for men (whether lay or ordained), this retreat will be preached by the Benedictine Monks of St Joseph's Abbey, France.

Founded in 1988, this community has retained its charism of a specific apostolate to men and of engaging them through a shortened version of the Ignatian Exercises.

One-to-one direction will be offered alongside the talks. Priests are welcome to attend and concelebrate or celebrate their own Mass.

For more information and to book: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/mens-spiritual-exercises/>

Theodore House, Christian Heritage Centre, at Stonyhurst.



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