

Summer Issue 2026

# Youth Ministry



*In The Archdiocese of Liverpool*



Liverpool  
Called

## Welcome!!!!



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Welcome to our end of year newsletter!

And somehow we have reached the end of another academic year!

It always feels as though the summer term disappears particularly quickly for us. There are retreats taking place, Confirmation preparation happening around the diocese, the Faith in Action award days to organise and, of course, everything that goes into preparing for Lourdes.

And then suddenly all of those things have happened and we are sitting down trying to remember what we have actually done over the last few months!

So this newsletter is our chance to look back over the summer term, celebrate some of what has happened and, most importantly, celebrate the young people who have been part of it all.

There are probably things we have forgotten — there usually are — but here goes...





# Lourdes 2026 - 50 years of the Youth Pilgrimage



We probably have to begin with Lourdes.

This year was always going to be a particularly special pilgrimage as we celebrated 50 years of the Liverpool Youth Pilgrimage.

Back at Easter we were still making plans, trying to track down former members of the pilgrimage and wondering exactly how everything would come together.

Well... it did!

This year over 300 of us travelled to Lourdes for the 50<sup>th</sup> time as a youth pilgrimage.

For some it was their first visit to Lourdes. For others it was another chapter in a journey that began several years ago. And this year we were also delighted to welcome back former members of the pilgrimage reminding us that the pilgrimage we have today exists because of the generosity and commitment of so many people over the last fifty years.

**Maybe a story that will be told in another 50 years was the youth torchlight. As a special honour we were asked to lead and also fulfil all the jobs that the torchlight has - carrying the statue and the candles. It all started so well in bright sun. And then as we got to Rosary Square the heavens opened in the type of rain that only Lourdes seems to know. The entire procession ran for cover, leaving only our young people at the front carrying the candles and cross and statue. It was quite the sight. You can see the after-effects in this picture here as the group that were left were then invited to go inside the chapel to say final prayers with the statue of Our Lady and get a photo. There have been no stories like that in 50 years and probably won't be for the next 50!**



*"Faith is not just something we believe — it is something we live, share, and grow together as a community."*





## Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee

Our theme for the pilgrimage this year was "Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee."

Throughout the week we tried to help our young people reflect on our theme by thinking about how the Lord is with us now and has been for 50 years of the youth pilgrimage.

As always, Lourdes gives us a strange mixture of experiences.

There are moments of prayer and silence alongside singing, laughter and probably not quite enough sleep. There are opportunities to serve others, opportunities to make new friendships and opportunities simply to stop for a little while and think about faith and life.

We hope that somewhere amongst all of that each young person was able to recognise that the words spoken to Mary are words that can reassure us too: the Lord is with us.

**'Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.'**

— Isaiah 43:1

## Celebrating 50 years

Of course, we could not allow fifty years to pass without doing something to celebrate!

On the final evening we had a 50 year celebration. This was not a Mass or Service. It was a chance to give thanks for the last 50 years. So we started with a drama-sketch that had staff members play different archetypes of young people we have had on the pilgrimage over the 50 years. The punk from the 70's who came not knowing anything about Lourdes, the footy fan from the 80's who came because their mates had come, the clubber from the 90's. Each with a different backstory and reason for coming. But all coming to Lourdes and being welcomed in to 'God's House'. We then had our photo reel of the week and then just a good old fashioned sing-song with all the favourites from the past and present!

It was a chance not simply to look backwards with nostalgia but to give thanks.

Thousands of young people have travelled to Lourdes with the Archdiocese over those fifty years. They have prayed there, served there, made friendships there and, in many cases, discovered something about their own faith there.

Many of those young people are now parents, grandparents, teachers, priests, deacons, religious and parishioners across the Archdiocese and beyond.



To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary we created a special scrap book of memories. If you would like a copy to revisit old memories from the youth pilgrimage and see those old photos you thought you might never see again, please contact us at [admin@animateyouth.co.uk](mailto:admin@animateyouth.co.uk). Price £10 with all proceeds going to the youth pilgrimage.

So while it was good to celebrate what has been, the anniversary also gives us reason to look forward.

Perhaps the best way to celebrate fifty years of the Youth Pilgrimage is to make sure that there is a pilgrimage for the next generation of young people as well.

# Photos from the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary pilgrimage



# Faith in Action - 10 years of the award



FAITH  
IN ACTION

Another anniversary this year was the 10th anniversary of the Faith in Action Award.

At Easter we said we were expecting another bumper year and, for the first time, we were preparing to hold three award days.

The final numbers were over 2100 young people completing the award across all levels. With over 1600 at Pin Level, 300 at Bronze, 150 at Silver and 40 at Gold.

Over the three celebration days we welcomed around 1000 of those young people to Lowe House.

And it was busy! But it was also a wonderful few days.

The Faith in Action Award asks young people to do much more than simply attend something or collect a certificate. Over the course of the year they have reflected on their faith and, importantly, put that faith into action through service of other people.

The award ceremonies are therefore our opportunity to say 'thank you'.

Thank you for the hours they have given. Thank you for the people they have helped. Thank you for the contribution they make to their schools, parishes and communities.

And after the formal part of the day we were able to celebrate with our Fun Day!

On a more sombre note, this year marked the last year Lauren will lead the award for us in the Diocese as she prepares to head off to pastures new in the New Year. She has helped oversee the growth of the award from a (still decent) starting number of about 400 young people involved in 2016 to the 2000 this year. We thought she might deserve a little award herself so we had Bishop Tom present her with her own FIA award!





It is quite remarkable to think how much the award has grown over those ten years.

Numbers are useful because they give us some idea of the scale of what is happening.

But behind every number is a young person who has chosen to give something of themselves for somebody else.

At a time when we can hear plenty about what is wrong with young people, perhaps these days give us an opportunity to tell another story.

There are thousands of young people in our Archdiocese quietly serving others, helping in their communities and trying to live out their faith.

That seems worth celebrating.





# School Retreats



While Lourdes and Faith in Action tend to take over our attention at this time of year, the normal retreat programme continues as well!

The summer term is always busy, particularly with Year 6 groups coming towards the end of their time in primary school, alongside our work with high schools and colleges.

It is impossible for us to know exactly what impact one retreat day has.

Sometimes a young person will say something during the day or speak to a member of the team and we get a glimpse of what they have taken from it. Most of the time we simply have to trust that something has been planted.

We often return to the image Jesus gives us in the parable of the sower.

Our job is to keep scattering the seed.

We pray that somewhere, sometimes perhaps long after we have met a young person, something of the Word they heard might begin to grow.

And maybe we can see the 'growth' in some of the events we have noted in this newsletter like Lourdes and FIA? Maybe it is a retreat or mission that started the journey toward those days, events and pilgrimages?



# Other Events

## YOUTH ALIVE JUNE 2026

In June we gathered at Lowe House for our summer Youth Alive Mass / Lourdes departure Mass.

It was nice to see the Church so full - with a few former members of the youth pilgrimage unable to come to Lourdes in the summer coming to this Mass. After Mass we had a time to mingle in the parish hall and we set up a few photo boards with photos testimonies from past Lourdes pilgrimages for people to look at and reminisce.

One of the things we continue to hear is that young people value opportunities simply to meet other young Catholics.

They may be the only young person regularly attending Mass in their parish, or one of only a handful in their school who actively practise their faith.

Events like this cannot solve that problem completely, but they can remind young people that they are not on their own.



## CONFIRMATION

Although Confirmation is not simply an Animate event, we continue to play our part in supporting the wider preparation of young people across the Archdiocese.

Earlier in the year members of the team visited Catholic high schools to encourage young people to consider receiving the sacrament.

Following registration, preparation then took place locally in parishes and deaneries.

This year approximately 1500 young people registered for Confirmation across the Archdiocese.

We continued to support preparation through our videos and livestreams that young people and parents can watch.

Perhaps most importantly, over the last few months young people across the Archdiocese have been coming forward to receive the sacrament itself.

Behind every statistic is a young person making a decision about their faith.

Please continue to keep them in your prayers — not simply on the day of their Confirmation but as they continue to discover what living as a disciple of Jesus might mean in the years ahead.



Liverpool Called - Confirmation (Non Catholic High Schools)

## SAVE THE DATE!!!!

**What: Youth Sunday Event 2026**

**When: 22 Nov 2026 10:30am – 5:00pm**

**Where: St Margaret Clitherow Centre, Liverpool**

SAVE THE DATE!  
**YOUTH SUNDAY**  
**22nd NOVEMBER**

St Margaret Clitherow Centre



Starts at  
10.30am



Music & Worship  
with  
One Hope Project



Ends with  
5pm Mass with  
Archbishop John  
Sherrington

ohp

Archdiocese of  
Liverpool



# Music Ministry



Our Music Ministry gatherings have continued this term and it has been lovely to see the group developing.

When we began this we wanted to create something that wasn't simply about learning hymns.

The music matters, obviously!

But just as important is giving young people from different schools and parishes a chance to meet one another, build friendships, pray together and discover that there are other young Catholics trying to live their faith as well.

This term we had our young people play and lead the music at our June Youth Alive Mass and also play an active part in leading the music in Lourdes.

We will be continuing the group in the new academic year and new members are always welcome.

You don't need to be an amazing singer or musician.

You just need to be willing to come along and have a go!!!



Faith  
Friendship  
Purpose



## Looking to the future...



Earlier this year the Archdiocese began a wider conversation about the future of youth ministry and we invited young people and adults to come along and contribute their ideas.

Thank you to everyone who took part in those conversations.

The feedback from those conversations has all been noted and a report made for the Archbishop to consider how best to proceed over the next 12 months, and then into the longer term future.

Youth ministry constantly changes because the lives of young people change.

What worked ten or twenty years ago will not necessarily work today, and what works in one part of the Archdiocese will not necessarily work somewhere else.

But the purpose remains the same: 'to accompany young people, to help them encounter Christ and to help them find their place within the life and mission of the Church'.

As plans develop we will share more. Please do know, though, and please also tell others who you might meet, that the events, pilgrimages and retreats are not just going to stop overnight! Rumours can abound at times! Certainly you can read on and see when and how Lourdes and FIA will be happening next year. Along with the other activities we offer across the Diocese.

For now, please continue to pray for everyone involved in this work and, particularly, for the young people whom we are here to serve.



# Upcoming Events & Calendar

Archdiocese of Liverpool Youth Ministry – Stay Connected & Informed



## LOOKING AHEAD

### September

School Retreats start

### September

FIA Registration Opens

### October

Music Ministry Meetings Begin

### November 22nd

Youth Sunday Event

### September 14 – Lourdes Applications Open

£50 early bird discount available until 19<sup>th</sup> October

## STAY CONNECTED

Follow us on social media for updates and reminders between meetings. Tag us in your photos and share your faith journey with the wider Catholic community!

## HOW TO REGISTER

For any event requiring registration / application, please go our website for more information: [www.animateyouth.org](http://www.animateyouth.org)



## Highlighted Event – Lourdes Pilgrimage 2027



What: Archdiocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Lourdes



When: July 21 - July 30 2027



How: Apply via [www.liverpool Lourdes youth.co.uk](http://www.liverpool Lourdes youth.co.uk)



# Keep In Touch

*We'd love to hear from you – reach out, connect, and get involved today*



## WAYS TO BE INVOLVED:

One reason we produce this newsletter is simply to let people know what is happening in youth ministry across the Archdiocese.

So firstly – please pass it on!

Forward it to somebody. Print it for the back of church. Send it to someone in your parish or school who might be interested.

But perhaps there is also something here that you could become involved in...



As you go forward, remember: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11. Go forth and shine your light in the world!



- encourage a young person to consider Lourdes;
  - help a school or parish take part in Faith in Action;
- volunteer to help us moderate Faith in Action or assist at the award days;
- encourage a young musician or singer to join our Music Ministry group;
- support Confirmation preparation in your local area;
  - encourage your school to book a retreat;
- come along to one of our Youth Alive events;
- or simply pray for the young people of the Archdiocese and those who work with them.

Youth ministry does not belong to one team at Lowe House.

Helping young people know Christ and find a home within the Church is something in which all of us have a part to play.

# Final Thoughts

And finally...

We began the year with plans, dates, calendars and plenty of ideas.

Some things worked exactly as we expected.

Some things changed along the way.

And there were probably one or two occasions when we wondered how everything was going to get done!

But as we look back over another academic year, mostly we are grateful.

Grateful for the schools and parishes who invite us to work with their young people.

Grateful for teachers, catechists, priests, volunteers and so many others who quietly support this ministry.

And especially grateful for the young people themselves.

For their enthusiasm.

For their questions.

For their willingness to get involved.

For the service they give to others.

And for all the different ways in which they remind us that the Church is not simply preparing for a future generation.

Young people are part of the Church now.

So as the summer fades back to autumn and the new year looms into view, please keep them — and all those who work alongside them — in your prayers.

And we'll start again in September!

— Archdiocese of Liverpool —  
Youth Ministry

# Prayer

Loving God,

We thank you for the young people of our Archdiocese.

For the gifts they share,  
the questions they ask,  
the joy they bring  
and the hope they offer.

We thank you for all that has taken place during this past year:  
for moments of prayer and pilgrimage,  
for acts of service,  
for friendships formed,  
and for every seed of faith that has been planted.

Be with our young people during the summer and into the new year.

Keep them safe,  
help them to know that they are loved,  
and remind them that wherever they go,  
you walk beside them.

Give us the wisdom and courage  
to continue accompanying them,  
to listen to them,  
to make space for them  
and to help them recognise the gifts you have given them.

And as we look towards another year,  
send your Holy Spirit upon our Archdiocese,  
that together we may build a Church  
in which every young person can know  
that they are welcomed, valued and needed.