



The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 378 + April '26

INSIDE: Cardinal Newman College welcomes new Chaplain Elizabeth Callaghan Full story & pictures on page 4 >



"This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad."



This Easter, hear Jesus calling your name, just as He called Mary Magdalenes, reminding you that you are loved, known, and redeemed.

Let us, like Mary Magdalene, boldly share the good news: "Jesus Christ is Risen, and He makes all things new! May you recognise the risen Lord in your own life and turn your tears into a joyful proclamation of..."

'I have seen the Lord!'

Easter Blessings of Peace & Joy

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Easter 2026

A Special Easter Message to The Catholic Voice of Lancaster Readers from Bishop Paul Swarbrick

“
The Lord is risen!
Alleluia!
He is risen indeed!
Alleluia!
”

We are talking about an event that happened at a particular moment in time. We are talking about an event that took place at a specific location, confidently identified and remembered for almost 2000 years up to the present. We are talking about an event recorded in history, concerning a named individual recognised not just by religious groups but also by secular authorities. We are talking about the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ from the dead.

Some who read this article may have had the privilege of visiting the tomb of Christ, the Holy Sepulchre, whilst on Pilgrimage. Others may have had the opportunity to view the remarkable Shroud of Turin, an object of Christian history that continues to defy science-based faith-sceptics. (Combine a study of the Shroud with a study of the famous Sudarium of Oviedo, the supposed face-cloth from the Holy Sepulchre. Such items of devotion can provoke and support belief in the resurrection of Christ.)

Given everything that encourages us to believe in Christ's resurrection we have to accept, in all humility, the fact that the Holy Land, together with all its associations, lies at the heart of probably the most consistently violent and disturbed region on the planet. How can Holiness exist in the heart of so much bloodshed and injustice? What difference has the resurrection made? If this was God's trump-card it appears to have failed to have the lasting effect we had hoped for. Too many innocent people – particularly children – have suffered and are suffering. Do we close our eyes when we pray in order to try and forget the inconvenient evidence of sin unconquered, sin rampant? Is it easier to believe in sin than in Grace? Christ rose with wounds still unhealed. What is that about if not telling us that there is work still to be done? We aren't in heaven yet.

We remember that the Gospel, the Good News, is given to us for the most dark and difficult times and circumstances not as a magic wand, but as a pledge of undying love. It is prepared to

stay with us even when things are getting worse so that we can hope for an outcome impossible for us to achieve through our own limited efforts.

From the very start of his public ministry Pope Leo spoke of unity and peace. The fact that the world order has declined since then has not silenced him. This is evidence for us that the Gospel refuses to be overwhelmed by tragedy, sin and hopelessness.

It is no accident that Christ lived in Galilee, that He met with a violent execution, that the Middle East is home to the Holy Land. It is where holiness is most needed.

When everything else is causing us to hang our heads and hide, the Gospel and the Resurrection of Christ bring us a light and hope and a future we can find nowhere else.



“The Lord is risen!”
“Alleluia! He is risen indeed!”
The Rt Rev Bishop Paul Swarbrick
Bishop of Lancaster



Bosco the parish dog enjoys the sunshine first bloom of Spring at Banklands, in the Parish of Christ The Good Shepherd Workington, Cumbria. Blessed with sunshine and nature in all its glory! Spring is breaking through!



Please pray for all our couples in the parish of Christ The Good Shepherd who are preparing for the sacrament of marriage and those who are meeting up for preparation, reflection and prayer.



Happy Easter Christ is Risen!

At the centre of our faith stands the proclamation that echoes through the centuries: Christ is risen! This is the heart of Easter and the foundation of Christian joy.

The Resurrection changes everything. Death is conquered. Sin is forgiven. Hope is restored. The empty tomb announces that God's love is stronger than any darkness.

Easter is not only something we celebrate — it is something we live. As people of the Resurrection, we are called to radiate hope, share forgiveness, and witness to the new life Christ offers to all.

By Andrew Wygladala

To All Our Readers

Wishing you an Easter filled with the warmth of God's love and the joy of His presence.

*From The Catholic Voice of Lancaster Team
Andrew, Fran, Pearl, Fr Stephen and Rob.*

An Easter Prayer and Reflection For Our Readers

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We come into your presence, O Lord, accepting your invitation to take up our daily cross and follow you.

The path of our life has been strewn with moments of pain and sin.

There were several instances in our lives when we gave up altogether on hope and fell into dark despair.

In such moments, your face was not visible to us. We thought we were alone.

This way of the Cross reminds us that you will never leave us alone. As we follow your footsteps, we want to offer you every form of grief that burdens our mind, every sickness that cripples our body, every bit of sin that enslaves our soul.

We have the confidence of faith that when we offer these burdens of our life to you, our cross will share the glory of your cross of Calvary.

Mother Mary, just as you walked in the footsteps of your son to Calvary, walk with us, teaching us to pray your prayer:

"Here am I, your servant; let it be done to me according to your word".

Lord, we have walked with you, following your footsteps on the way to Calvary.

But your journey did not end with the cross of Calvary or at the dark tomb. It proceeded to the glory of the Resurrection.

How glorious indeed is the light of your resurrection!

We believe that death, mourning and sin are now defeated.

In every moment of grief and failure and sin, we shall wait and pray for your Holy Spirit to raise us to a new hope - a hope that will finally be realised in our resurrection to a new life with you.

We remember the promise that "if we die with Him, we shall also live with him".

**Let no failure lead us to grief.
Let no sin lead us to destruction.
Let no sickness lead to self pity.**

And let no death be counted as the end. In every such moment, let us be able to look at your gloried body and find hope.

Let the rays of your glorious resurrection shed light in the dark moments of our life, leading us to your presence. Amen.

Our Father & Hail Mary

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Peace & Easter Blessings to all

Father Nithin Antony, St Kentigern's RC Ch, Blackpool

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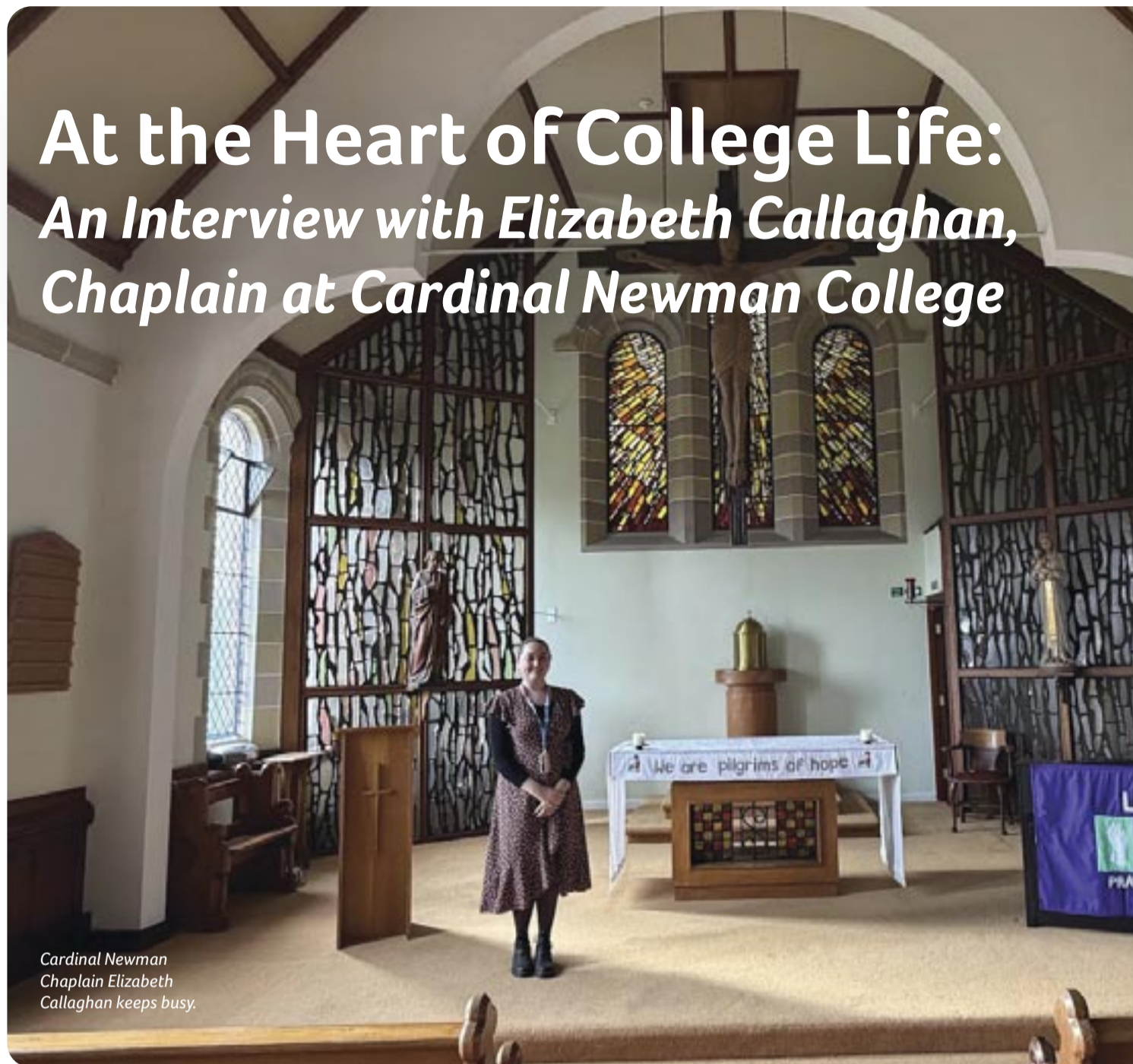
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At the Heart of College Life: An Interview with Elizabeth Callaghan, Chaplain at Cardinal Newman College



Cardinal Newman
Chaplain Elizabeth
Callaghan keeps busy.



Six months into her role at Cardinal Newman College, College Chaplain Elizabeth Callaghan is already making her presence felt — not through grand gestures, but through quiet accompaniment, student-led initiatives, and a vision that places chaplaincy at the very heart of college life. Coming from a secondary school background, Elizabeth describes the transition to post-16 chaplaincy as “very different.”

“In secondary school,” she explains, “students are often eager and enthusiastic, but they don’t necessarily question their faith. In a sixth form college, students are more mature. They ask deeper questions — ‘Why do I believe this?’, ‘What does this mean?’, ‘Is there more to life than this?’ That changes the conversation.”

Elizabeth’s own journey into chaplaincy was unexpected. After studying Music Business at Leeds College of Music, the pandemic disrupted her plans for a career in the music industry. Working in various roles during that period led her to reflect more deeply on vocation. While working in a Catholic high school as an administrator, she observed the chaplains at work.

“I watched them lead prayer, organise Masses, and create what I call ‘random acts of faith’ during Lent and other seasons. I thought — I could do that.”

Three weeks later, she had applied for a chaplaincy role at another institution, beginning what she describes as a deeply fulfilling ministry serving young people. Now at Newman, her understanding of chaplaincy is clear: service.

“The role of a chaplain is to serve the community in whatever the community needs in that moment. Sometimes that’s joyful. Sometimes it’s supporting someone through bereavement or a difficult situation. It’s about being part of the support network.”

Elizabeth is careful to distinguish her role from that of counsellors based in the College’s St Raphael’s Wellbeing Centre. “I’m not a trained counsellor. I’m a listening ear. If a student needs specialist help, I signpost them. But often they just need someone to talk to — someone who will sit with them.”

Faith questions arise in many forms. Some students are exploring Catholicism in depth — including one currently on an RCIA journey — asking about teachings such as the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit. Others are wrestling with life’s bigger questions following bereavement or personal struggles.

“What’s beautiful,” Elizabeth says, “is that every question challenges my own faith and deepens my understanding.”

The College chapel remains a central space, with weekly Mass and opportunities for personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. But chaplaincy extends well beyond formal liturgy.

A student-led Christian Union now meets regularly to study Uncover Luke, bringing together Catholics and Christians from other denominations. “It’s wonderful to see them realise they’re not so different,” she reflects.

She has also established a Legion of Mary group, inspired by its founder Frank Duff. Students commit to prayer, the Rosary, and acts of service, reframing the good works they already undertake — such as altar serving or daily prayer — as conscious acts of faith offered through Mary’s intercession.

Elsewhere, the chaplaincy space itself has become something of a home from home. With an open-door policy, students drop in to talk, play board games, craft, or simply sit quietly. A weekly “Knitting and Natter” group recently crocheted poppies displayed for Remembrance Day in collaboration with the Royal British Legion.

“It’s not just a study space,” Elizabeth says. “It’s somewhere safe. Somewhere different.” Asked what makes a Catholic college distinctive, she draws on personal

experience. As a student herself, she once found renewed support in a Catholic sixth form after struggling elsewhere.

“A Catholic college sees the person, not just the grades. It’s about potential. It’s about dignity. That pastoral care makes all the difference.”

Looking ahead, her hope is bold yet simple: growth.

“I want chaplaincy to be at the centre of college life. Not just a room people pass on the way to Starbucks — but the heart.”

And if she could say one thing to students about faith?

“Keep watering it,” she smiles. “My job is to plant seeds. Sometimes you don’t see what grows straight away. But if you keep watering your faith, it will grow — often in ways you don’t expect.”

Andrew Wygladala

Blackpool Schools Shine The Light of Christ through Pope Leo's Words



St Mary's



Holy Family



St John Vianney's



St Kentigern's



Our Lady of the Assumption. (Above) St Cuthbert's. (Right) Christ the King. (Below)

On Tuesday 3rd March 2026, several schools from in and around the Blackpool area came together at St. Teresa's Church to celebrate the ministry and words of our Pope Leo. Holy Family choir opened the event with Pope Leo's words "Peace be with you."

Their offering was a mix of reflective text and the power of song. The BSL contribution with authentic British Sign Language was a joy to behold. Their accuracy and sense of control was incredible and one that if you were deaf or could communicate using BSL would have understood across every sign.

Next came St Kentigerns Primary who focused on relationships through Pope Leo's words, "Help us, one and all, to build bridges through dialogue and encounter." The children began with lit candles at the start of the service so those in the congregation were eager and excited to see what unfolded. Their contribution continued with brave tuneful and confident solos. Not once, but twice, supported by others in the group. Light left the altar with us all truly clear on how we can build a bridge with each other but also within our communities.

The third school, St Bernadette's Primary appeared in true Lenten colours. The strength of purple in their uniform is a powerful reminder of Jesus is our hope on a daily basis as they delivered the words: "Jesus is our hope." The children, led by four at the front and 15 behind, learnt so many words of the song, to be an example of "the living hope".

Next came "God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail" from St. John Vianney Primary, performed by some of their youngest pupils. A powerful reflection on the agony and joy of cross. It began with a history lesson that took us through salvation. The beautiful imagery and such attention to detail in the writing shared helped to set a powerful opening to the scene. Angelic voices quickly followed with signs and symbolism supporting their piece.

St John's Poulton Primary had Leo's words: "Our neighbours are not first our enemies ... but other men and women with whom we can speak." St John's offered a mix of freeze frame, mime, drama and clearly powerfully delivered words. The use of stillness against the impact of the text was genuinely moving. The song choice was a well loved and powerful tune and one that summed up the scene of community clearly: "Here I am to worship".

Our Lady of the Assumption Primary were next with "In a divided and troubled world, the Holy Spirit teaches us to walk together in unity." They truly made us sit up and watch - a powerful entry that was informative and captured everyone's attention. How clear their diction, how steady their words. It really made us look and question. The lights in the middle of the scene created a special calmness in contrast to their loud and rambunctious entry.

Next was Christ the King Primary with "Let us disarm words and we will help to disarm the world." The words written in red, for Christ's blood indicating misery and sadness at the start of their peace. As Jesus was lifted high there was an audible gasp in the congregation. What a journey unfolded in front of us. At one point there was a sense of Eurovision style changes as their outer shell of grey was removed to reveal a very white, crisp shirt filled with gospel phrases of positivity. The physical movement of ripping up the "HATE" left us with a sense of power that the Gospel can end this feeling,

St Cuthbert's were the penultimate primary school. Their theme was "Christ is our saviour and in him we are one, a family of God, beyond the rich variety of our languages, cultures, and experiences." The children appeared in strong and striking t-shirts with the cross proud on the costume, showing light in the darkness. The lyric - A gospel for every colour is something that we all genuinely pray is a reality for our future. Difference is good and is powerful.

Our final primary school were (hosts) St Teresa's, whose theme was "Do not be afraid! Accept the invitation of the Church and of Christ the Lord." They began with a powerful reflection on the theme of courage. Then came a peaceful, quiet, tuneful song. Toes were tapping initially but then there was a moment at the end, when the tune ended and a period of stillness was experienced.

And within an hour, the Lenten reflection on Pope Leo's words was over and St Mary's RC Academy were concluding our reflection with song and poetry. A special poem, written for the event by Christine Smith (Chaplain) was shared in a particularly clever way as a backdrop to their salvation story. Then 11 children, in the St Mary's Academy Choir, led by Laura Higgins, together with their God given talents filled our church with joy, as they sang beautifully, "Oh Happy Day". It was a peaceful place to listen.

Sarah Smith, Executive Head Teacher, Christ The King & St Cuthbert's Primary Schools, Blackpool

David Pope dip FD MBIFD

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Pupils at St John Vianney's Celebrate the opening of their new Saint Carlo Acutis Chapel

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School in Blackpool have proudly opened a chapel to provide a dedicated sacred space where children can pray and take part in liturgies throughout the day. The children were invited to choose a saint after whom the chapel would be named and, following careful research, they unanimously chose Saint Carlo Acutis.

They were inspired by Carlo's deep love for God, his devotion to the Eucharist and the way he lived his faith joyfully in everyday life. As a young person who used his gifts in technology to spread the message of Jesus, Carlo's life felt especially relatable and meaningful to the children.

The KS2 Prayer Leaders have recently enjoyed a visit to St Mary's Church in Burnley, where they were able to view the relics of Saint Carlo Acutis. During the visit, the children took part in a beautiful liturgy and had the opportunity to see the relics up close and receive a blessing. This prayerful experience helped the children to deepen their understanding of Carlo's life. It was a truly engaging, reflective and inspiring occasion, supporting the children as they seek to follow in the footsteps of this remarkable twenty first century saint.



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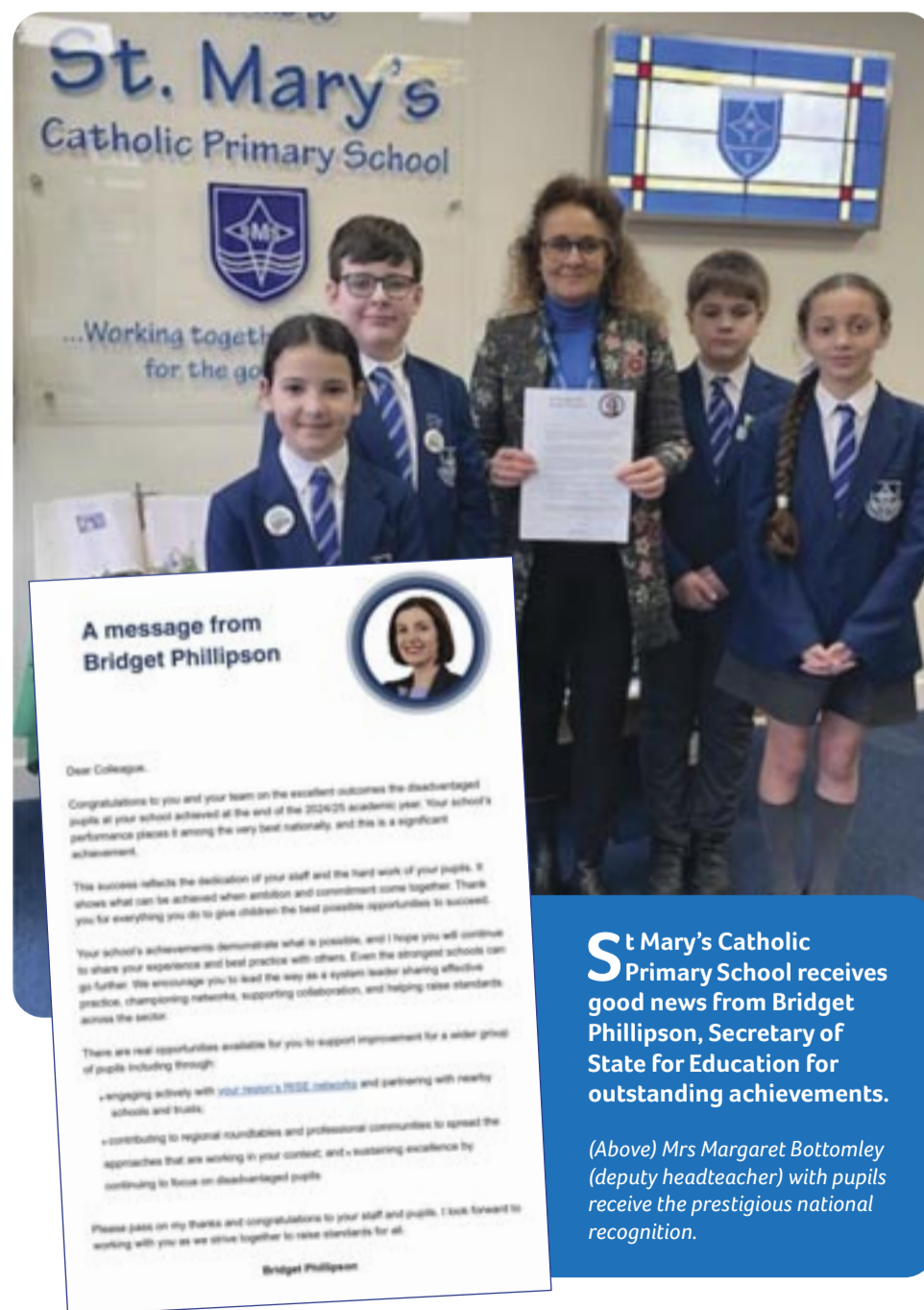
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St. Mary's
Catholic Primary School

...Working together
for the good

**A message from
Bridget Phillipson**



Dear Colleagues,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at your school achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

There are real opportunities available for you to support improvement for a wider group of pupils including through:

- engaging actively with your [region's HEE networks](#) and partnering with nearby schools and trusts;
- contributing to regional roundtables and professional communities to spread the approaches that are working in your context; and
- sustaining excellence by continuing to focus on disadvantaged pupils.

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your staff and pupils. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to raise standards for all.

Bridget Phillipson

St Mary's Catholic Primary School receives good news from Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education for outstanding achievements.

(Above) Mrs Margaret Bottomley (deputy headteacher) with pupils receive the prestigious national recognition.

School Of Sanctuary Mass at St Mary's Primary, Fleetwood



School of Sanctuary Miss Sewell and pupils with the food bank donations.

On Thursday 12th February, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood gathered their school and local community together, led by the school's Mini Vinnies, for a very special Mass to celebrate our commitment as a School of Sanctuary.

They were honoured to welcome representatives from local Christian churches, neighbouring schools and parishioners as they came together in faith, unity and shared purpose.

The celebration was a powerful reminder of our call to love our neighbour and to stand in solidarity with refugees and any family who has come to live in the town.

Through prayer, scripture and reflection, they reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that their school is a place of welcome, safety and belonging for all.

As part of our celebration, staff and families generously contributed to a food bank collection in support of those in need within our local community.

Mrs Sewell (RE Lead) said:

"We are incredibly proud of the compassion and generosity shown by our school community, living out the Gospel values in such a practical and meaningful way. Together, we will continue to build a community rooted in dignity, compassion and hope, where everyone is welcomed and valued."

*Mrs Sewell, RE Lead
St Mary's Catholic Primary School Fleetwood*



Pupils gather for the School of Sanctuary Mass.



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Bishop Paul Swarbrick of Lancaster and Bishop Philip North of Blackburn Cathedral.

Bishop Paul Swarbrick appointed an Honorary Ecumenical Canon at Blackburn Cathedral by Bishop of Blackburn Philip North

In a Special Choral Evensong service for the Installation of Honorary Canons held at Blackburn Cathedral on Sunday 1st March, Bishop Paul represented the Catholic faith of Lancaster and was joined by Pete Baker, the Pastor of Life Church in Burnley who was also appointed an Honorary Ecumenical Canon, to foster strong relationships of Christian faith in the community.

The role of Lay Canon was awarded to Becky Gilbert-Rule, a church architect who has made an outstanding contribution to the development of Blackburn Cathedral's buildings and serves on the DAC.

Other Honorary Canons included the Rev Damian Porter who throughout his long ministry in the diocese has brought fresh life to a number of new parishes and chairs the Property Committee at Blackburn Cathedral.

The Rev Lucy Lynn who is Blackburn Cathedral's Dean of Women's Ministry and a strong voice for rural churches was also awarded Honorary Canon.

Bishop Of Blackburn Philip North explained: "Ecumenical Canons of this our Cathedral Church are appointed to honour and acknowledge an outstanding contribution made to the life of this our Diocese by a member of another Christian Denomination and to affirm our commitment to Ecumenical working.

"It belongs to the office of Ecumenical Canon, under the guidance of the Bishop and the Dean, to seek to contribute to the corporate life of this Cathedral Church and to promote its mission and service and extend its influence throughout the Diocese and region and to respond in good faith to such other points as are contained in the relevant Cathedral Statute."

Pearl Mina



Bishop Paul with the Rt Rev Dr Jill Duff.



Bishop Paul Swarbrick:

"It's quite a privilege to be invited to be an Honorary Canon here at Blackburn Cathedral. Bishop Philip North is a very dynamic, young Bishop in the Anglican Church and to be closely associated with him in this way, supporting his ministry, as he grapples with all the issues that they have in the Diocese.

"It's just lovely to be drawn in closely in this collaborative way. I must say I was rather surprised to be invited to do this and at first rather dubious whether I was allowed, but I checked with the Archbishop of Birmingham, Bernard Longley, who worked with Christian Unity in Rome, and he

made it quite clear that it's more than appropriate to take it on as an honorary role.

"I'm not changing my allegiance from Catholic at all, but I am respecting the good that the Church of England does. We work in the same vineyard. I must say that I haven't yet seen the small print, but I won't be doing anything that compromises our Catholic Christian faith, and yet at the same time, it's to our benefit that the Anglican church here reaches out to people and draws them to Christ.

"The healthier the Anglican Church is, the closer it is to God, the better it is for all of us."



A packed Blackburn Cathedral attends the Vespers Service.



Bishop Paul Swarbrick Installed as an Honorary Canon at Blackburn Cathedral.



Ever wondered how ordination as a deacon can affect a man's wife and family?

An article by Deacon Bernard Farrell-Roberts



Deacon Rev John Chantry & Family.



Deacon David Pope & Family.



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Many of us have known or know a married deacon, but have you ever wondered what happens to the marriage and the family when a husband and father is ordained a deacon? Some 93% of 'permanent' deacons in the Catholic Church were married when they were ordained. So, what about their wives and families? How does having a deacon in the family affect them?

It won't surprise you to know that the majority of deacons' wives are themselves Catholics. But it might well come as a surprise to know that some deacons' wives that I know are atheists, others Muslim, and others have various faiths and beliefs. What is important though, so important that the Church demands it, is that the deacon enjoys the full support of his wife, not only during his ministry, but also throughout his formation. The Church considers this so important that all wives are asked to state their willing consent before their husbands can begin diaconal formation, and then, prior to ordination, wives have private interviews with a Bishop and are asked to sign a written declaration stating their support for their husbands' ordination.

So, what do wives of deacons say about the day to day reality of being married to a deacon? Research among wives indicates that ordination always has an effect on family life, that there are many positive effects, but that there can also be many challenging ones too. For example, they frequently feel that, following their husband's ordination, they suddenly become 'deacon widows,' or 'pew widows'. Why? Because they can no longer sit together with their husbands at Mass. In fact, many state that even many years later, it remained very hard to adjust to this particular change.

Another immediate change for most deacons' wives is that their heads, in the eyes of many in the parish, are suddenly 'raised above the parapet'. This often results in them being expected to be far more active in the church than before. My wife found that she was suddenly asked questions she had no answer to, such as where the new candles were, or why the tabernacle red candle wasn't lit; and even where replacement toilet rolls were! Parishioners often seem to expect that deacons' wives will automatically do a lot of things like serving tea, cleaning, or putting tables out in the church hall, just because they are married to a deacon. Fortunately, most deacons' wives are only too happy to help!

However, this assumption can be problematic for those wives who don't wish to have a public role as 'the wife of a deacon'. Some wives fear being seen as some sort of 'gobetween' between parishioners and their husbands. Fortunately, this doesn't materialize very often. Others fear that they may always be seen as a deacon's wife, but not as themselves.

Despite the above, when asked what impact the permanent diaconate has had on their husbands and their families,

most wives say that it has had a very positive impact. That their marriages have grown stronger, and that the diaconate has brought them closer than ever to their husbands. They also frequently comment that both they and their husbands have grown in their faith, and spiritually, since his ordination.

It is also true that some find that their husbands' ministry can sometimes negatively impact on their lives, especially when he is frequently unavailable for family functions and activities. The hardest challenge it seems is for their husbands to achieve some sense of balance, to get the pieces of their lives such as marriage, family responsibilities, work, and ministry, all to fit together. Having said that, some wives wish that their husbands had pursued the diaconate earlier than they had, because it had been such a very fulfilling experience for both of them!

A common experience for all deacons' wives is that they have very good relationships with Bishops, priests, deacons, and parishioners, and feel that they and their husbands are "diaconal couples". These wives tend to be satisfied with their marriages, family responsibilities, work lives, and the roles they play in the Church.

And what about the children of deacons? Most adult children feel that their fathers were successful in balancing the various roles and obligations relating to their marriages, family responsibilities, work lives, and ministry. Sadly though, some have upsetting experiences linked their father's diaconate. An RE teacher in a Catholic school once reprimanded a student for not knowing the answer to a question because "Her father was a deacon". Fortunately, episodes like this are few and far between. Most children appear to like and appreciate having a father who is also a deacon.

Finally, I would like to quote the words of the wife of a deacon about the ordination of her husband: "I fully expected my husband, at his ordination, to receive supernatural graces to help him live his vocation, but I was surprised by the graces I received. When the bishop laid his hands on my husband's head, I knew with certainty that the Holy Spirit was doing something in me too. In the weeks that followed, I became aware of a new generosity that manifested itself in a willingness to share both the gift of my husband and my own gifts with the Church." The beauty of the married diaconate is reflected so well in her words. Both husband and wife are called to give up a part of themselves to the service of Christ, so that the deacon can fully exercise his ministry, and both are given the grace necessary for this to happen.

For this article I have used my own experience as a deacon, and of more than 20 years in the formation of deacons, coupled with the findings of the research paper of William Smith titled: 'Permanent Catholic Deacons: Balancing Work, Family Life, and Ministry,' published in the 'Journal of Sociology and Christianity'.

Parishioners from Blackpool Deanery gather and take part for the Synodal Journey meeting.

(Right) Father Peter Sharrock.

The Synodal Journey Continues on the North Fylde Coast

On Saturday, February 7th in St Mary's Catholic Academy, Blackpool, 129 people from the 12 parishes in the Deanery met to build on the foundation we made when we met, prayed and listened together in November about what God is asking us to be and to do. In this meeting we began to look at practical issues for the future of our parishes.

After a welcome from our Dean, Father Peter Sharrock, we shared a time of song, prayer and reflection in which we heard again Jesus announcing his mission in the synagogue at Nazareth. We were then reminded of the journey so far and invited to form working groups. There were nine group options representing the practical issues that had emerged from the reports sent in from parish meetings held last autumn. They are:

- **COMMUNICATION AND ADMINISTRATION** Set up a central administrative point; a deanery website? Co-ordination of deanery events both pastoral and social.
- **PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION** Planning and decision making through active Parish and Deanery pastoral councils.
- **SKILLS AUDIT** Identifying the gifts and skills within the parish communities to work in the wider Church.
- **PARISH BUILDINGS** Review parish buildings and the responsibility for costs, upkeep, repair etc.
- **CO-ORDINATE MASSES** and religious Services across the deanery.
- **DEANERY-WIDE FORMATION AND TRAINING** for catechists, catechetical programmes and on-going formation for adults.
- **CONCERN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

- **ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS** within the deanery.
- **OUR MISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE** collaboration and outreach within the wider community for social justice, homelessness, poverty, migrants, those who are isolated and lonely.

Each group was asked to spend time listening to what every member wanted to contribute and then to decide on three action steps they could take to begin to move this issue forward.

Members were asked to share their contact details so that further group meetings could take place before another full Deanery meeting after Easter. At noon all the groups came together and reported briefly on their action steps.

Canon Alf Hayes, who has worked in partnership with Father Peter throughout this synodal journey, facilitated this stage and then shared a very telling quotation from Timothy Radcliffe's book "TAKE THE PLUNGE" about the importance of the growth of lay leadership in the life of the Church in our times.

"Never before have such vast numbers of lay men and women been actively committed to the life and ministry of the Church. This is a time of immense vitality for lay leadership in the Catholic Church."

With that encouragement to service and the energy that comes from being Church together, we stood for a final blessing and sang with fervour: "Here I am Lord", now ready to move on in this synodal journey of spiritual renewal and structural reform.



By Sister Philomena Grimley, Sisters of the Holy Child (SHCJ)



Holy Week Mass Times

St Anne's on the Sea
Our Lady Star of the Sea

Maunder Thursday

Mass of the Lord's Supper 7.00pm

Good Friday

Stations of the Cross 10.00am
Liturgy of the Lord's Passion 3.00pm

Holy Saturday

Easter Vigil 7.00pm

Easter Sunday

Family Mass 9.30am
Mass 11.00am

CELEBRATION OF DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY (FEAST OF MERCY)

12th April 2026 2.30pm-4pm

St Clare's RC Church
Sharoe Green Lane

Fulwood, Preston PR2 9HH


Welcome and Introduction by the priest
Exposition of the Blessed



Sacrament
Words of Our Lord on Divine Mercy and Feast of Mercy
Blessing of the Divine Mercy Image and relic of St Faustina
The Divine Mercy Chaplet/Confessions
Litany of Divine Mercy
Meditations from the Diary of St Faustina
Benediction
Veneration of The Divine Mercy Image and relic of St Faustina
Closing Hymn

Afterwards all are welcome for refreshments in the Parish Hall

Wishing all our readers a Holy and Happy Easter from all at CathCom and the Diocese of Lancaster



Spirituality Now With Ursula Walker



The Great Gift of the Eucharist

The last thing Jesus does before his Passion is to give Himself totally to us. He sits with His friends at the last Passover Supper and taking the bread He says: *“This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”* Then taking the wine after the supper he says: *“This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”* Then He shows us just how much He does love us by giving Himself willingly to the chief priests and scribes. He endures His passion and death.

“When we carry out this command of the Lord by celebrating the memorial of his sacrifice. In so doing, we offer to the Father what he has himself given us: the gifts of his creation, bread and wine which by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the words of Christ, have become the body and blood of Christ. Christ is thus really and mysteriously made present.” (CCC1357).

Jesus wanted to stay close to us forever but he could not stay physically present as a human being so he gave us himself sacramentally. How much closer could He come to us than by giving us His very self! We eat and drink Him – He becomes a part of us. Our job is to become *“what we eat”* i.e. Him.

We are called to be Christ for one another. We forget sometimes that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit through our Baptism. We find it hard to see beyond the outer appearance whereas God sees the heart of a person. We need to be strengthened and nourished to see as He sees.

We are given the Eucharist as food to nourish us. To nourish our minds through the Word we hear and our hearts by receiving the body and blood of Jesus. We are called to be more like Jesus and by going to Mass we have the very thing we need to help us to become *“Jesus”* for each other. To see Jesus present in each person in the pews around us. We are fed so we

can go out and bring Jesus to all those people we meet during the week.

“Jesus is Love and he has made himself food and drink for us in the Eucharist. The more we nourish ourselves on the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, the more we will be able to love...” Carlos Acutis

Our bodies need food just as our soul needs food. Let me put it another way. I enjoy cycling but in order to be able to cycle I have to eat. My body needs food to give it energy to push the pedals around. If I do not eat enough I end up in a state called *“the bonk.”* Your body does not slowly stop, it just stops! My legs turn to jelly and I start to shake. I cannot go on until I eat something – my body has nothing left to give. After stopping and eating something (a Mars Bar!) I can carry on to the next café. This can be likened to our spiritual journey, if we do not feed it, it will stop. We need to nourish ourselves spiritually as well as physically.

The Eucharist is the best thing for our spiritual life as the Catechism says, *“The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian Life.”* (CCC1324).

Did you know it is the only Sacrament in which we receive Jesus Himself, in all the others we are given His power. We are given Jesus’ body and blood, his flesh and blood – WOW. It may still look like bread and wine but through the Holy Spirit it changes it into the body and blood of Jesus Himself.

St Thomas Aquinas tells us *“What the soul is hungry for, finally, is the person of Jesus, the body and blood of Christ. Without feeding regularly on that food, the soul will atrophy.”* Jesus tells us, *“Do this in remembrance of me.”* I think He knows what is good for us!

Ursula Walker, Spiritual Rep for the Diocese
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Holy Communion As Our Fuel For The World

I have always found it striking how quickly everything happens after we receive Holy Communion. We are given the very Body of Christ and then, almost immediately, the priest offers a brief prayer, a final blessing, and we are sent out the doors.

There is hardly any pause between the gift of the sacred host we receive and the mission we are given. The Church wastes

no time because Christ does not want to remain only on our tongues... he wants to be carried into the streets, workplaces, hospitals, schools, into every corner of the world. Mass ends, and we are sent on mission to proclaim. We leave the altar like living tabernacles, Christ burning inside us, called to set hearts alight with the love we have just consumed. Communion is not just for us, it is fuel for the world.

Fr Patrick van der Vorst



Turin Shroud Exhibition

The Shroud of Turin will be on display in the South Transept at Blackburn Cathedral during the Lent and Easter period, 2026.

As part of the Centenary celebrations of Blackburn Cathedral, a replica of the Shroud of Turin and supporting exhibition will be displayed at Blackburn Cathedral from Monday 23rd March until Sunday 12th April 2026.

It is a life-size replica of the original burial shroud believed to have been used to wrap the body of Jesus after the Crucifixion.

It offers a wonderful opportunity to learn more and study this sacred cloth - which for some, has proved to be a deeply moving and profound experience.

About the Shroud

Few people have had the rare privilege of standing before the actual Shroud of Turin during its limited public display in the Cathedral of San Giovanni Battista, Turin, Italy.

The Shroud is a length of linen cloth that bears a faint image of the front and back of a crucified man.

It is believed by many to be the actual burial Shroud used to wrap the body

of the Lord Jesus after his crucifixion, and upon which his bodily image is miraculously imprinted.

Turin Shroud Exhibition

This life-sized replica will offer guests a unique chance to examine it in detail. It provides a fascinating opportunity to study this sacred cloth and for some this has proved to be a deeply moving and profound experience which has strengthened their faith. In addition to the life-size replica of the Shroud, an accompanying exhibition features evidence revealed by historical and scientific research.

Featuring displays and information boards, it explains how the Shroud's image and bloodstains align with Gospel accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Visiting the Turin Shroud

The Shroud and exhibition will be available to view during the Cathedral's normal opening hours. There is no charge to visit, however as a charity, the cathedral depends on donations to support the cost of hosting installations like this and visitor generosity enables them to continue hosting important events like this in the future.

For more information go to: www.blackburncathedral.com

April 2026 // What's On

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Upcoming Events at Hying Hall, Warton, near Carnforth

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Prayer is for Everyone

Saturday 9th May – 9.30 Coffee/Arrivals – Finish at 4.00. More details to follow.

Contact Sr Mary Bernard for more information – hyingbookings@yahoo.co.uk
Website – www.hying.org

Upcoming Events at Boarbank Hall, Grange-over-Sands

Day of Recollection

18th July for parish Laudato Si' representatives or those interested in encouraging Care for Creation. 10.00 with Mass – 3.30. There may be help with travel costs.

Craft Weekend

1st-3rd/4th May 2026. Bring your own arts or crafts, enjoy working and sharing.

Two Wings and Some Prayers

9th-14th/16th May 2026. Prayer, walks, birdwatching, and learning birdsong.

For more information or booking, email margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk or visit the website at: www.boarbankhall.org.uk

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Rite of Election Brings New Joy To Our Diocese

On 21st February, parishioners from across the diocese gathered at Lancaster Cathedral for the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion, meeting Bishop Paul and taking an important step towards Easter.

It was inspiring to see the Cathedral filled with catechumens and candidates — a powerful witness to faith and hope. Those preparing for the Sacraments were called forward, responding generously to God's call.

Please keep all the Elect and Candidates in your prayers as they prepare for the Easter Vigil, and remember those who accompany them on their journey of faith.





The Catholic Voice of Lancaster 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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Requiem Mass for Fr Peter Foulkes

The Diocese of Lancaster gathered in prayer and thanksgiving on 16th February for the Requiem Mass of Fr Peter Foulkes, a priest who gave forty-nine years of devoted service to the people of the Diocese of Lancaster.

The funeral liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Paul Swarbrick, with many priests of the diocese concelebrating. The church was filled with former parishioners, friends and family members whose lives had been touched by Fr Peter's faithful ministry over many decades.

Fr Peter was ordained in 1966 and began his priestly ministry as Assistant Priest at St Augustine's, Preston (1966–1973). He then served at St Bede's, Carlisle (1973–1984), where he became a familiar and much-loved presence in parish life. In 1985 he returned to St Augustine's, Preston, this time as Parish Priest, serving until 1997.

He later ministered as Parish Priest at St Joseph's, Seascale (1997–2000), before

moving to Lancaster where he served at St Bernadette's from 2000 until his retirement in 2015. During this period, he was also Priest in Charge of St Thomas and St Elizabeth, Thurnham (2001–2015), generously sharing his pastoral care across communities.

In September 2015, after nearly half a century of priestly service, Fr Peter retired from active ministry. His long years of dedication reflected a steady and faithful commitment to parish life: celebrating the sacraments, preaching the Gospel, visiting the sick, accompanying families in times of joy and sorrow, and serving quietly and consistently wherever he was sent.

The eulogy was given by Canon Manny Gribben, who spoke warmly of Fr Peter's character, priestly fraternity and deep sense of vocation. The presence of so many brother priests in the sanctuary was a visible sign of the affection and respect in which he was held.

As the Requiem Mass was being celebrated in Lancaster, Fr Peter's brother, Fr John Foulkes, also celebrated a Requiem Mass together with Fr Peter Clarke at the home of Frs Peter and John in Lytham St Annes. This parallel act of prayer provided a deeply personal and familial tribute, uniting family, friends and brother priests in thanksgiving for Fr Peter's life and priestly ministry. The presence of so many former parishioners bore witness to the lasting impact of Fr Peter's ministry. Across Preston, Carlisle, Seascale, Lancaster and Thurnham, generations of Catholics remember him as a devoted shepherd who gave himself generously to the people entrusted to his care.

As we commend Fr Peter to the mercy of God, we give thanks for his priesthood, for his years of service to the Diocese of Lancaster, and for the countless quiet acts of pastoral love that will never be fully known this side of eternity. Fr Peter was laid to rest in Crosthwaite Cemetery, Keswick with his brother Fr Anthony and his parents. *May he rest in peace.* **Andrew Wygladala**

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New Divine Mercy Portrait Painted by Catholic Artist Jenny McLaughlin



As the Divine Mercy Feast Day approaches on Sunday April 12th 2026, we are delighted to showcase Catholic artist Jenny McLaughlin's new portrait and imagining of the Divine Mercy of Jesus.

"This is my version of Jesus, I Trust in You" says Jenny as she exclusively shares her vision with The Catholic Voice of Lancaster readers: "My painting is finished at last, six months since I started. It now needs to dry for three months before

varnishing and then I will take it to be framed. This is a painting to express my thanks to God. The inspiration came when we went through a really hard time in 2025.

"I hadn't prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet to ask for assistance with problems before, so I just thought I would give it a try. I prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet and it was amazing, that very same day, we had a change in our situation and things started to improve for our son and for ourselves. "In my gratitude, I wanted to paint a

painting inspired by the Divine Mercy Chaplet, the Divine Mercy image and Saint Faustina's visions, so here it is. I used Alkyd Oils and added the final touches, giving Jesus the trace of a smile, increasing the vibrancy of the rays, improving the colours of Our Lord's robes, adding more details to Our Lord's hands and heart. I also was trying to get the brightness of Our Lord's heart and the radiant light, the burning fire of His Love for us all. I also added more details to Our Lord's feet, improved the colour of the Earth and sharpened the

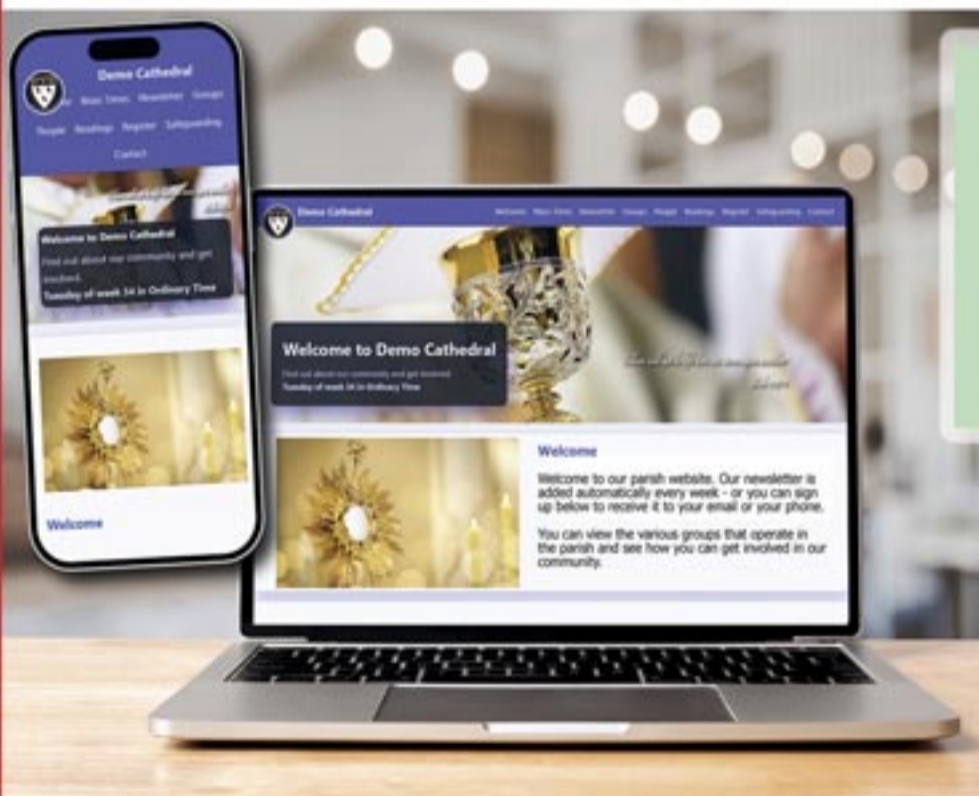
words 'Jesus, I Trust in You'... I have signed my painting.

"I featured Jesus walking across the globe because an image of Our Lord walking across the globe came to mind on one occasion whilst I was praying the Chaplet. I think this helps to emphasize God's mercy for all mankind. God loves us all so very much."

Thank You God. Jesus, I Trust in You. Amen
*Jenny McLaughlin, Catholic Artist
 Parish of The Guardian Angels, Blackpool*

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