

The Official Newspaper of
the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 382 + September '26

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**Diocese welcomes
new Deacons**
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*St. Michael the Archangel,
Defend us this day in battle.
Be our defence against the wickedness
and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.*

**St Michael & The Archangels
Feast Day | 29th September**

Pray for Heavenly Protection with St Michael The Archangel in September

In the sight of the angels
I will sing your praises, Lord.
I will give thanks to you, O LORD,
with all my heart, *Psalm 138:1*

**Read The Sword of St Michael
SPECIAL FEATURE page 10 >>**

Archangel Michael Defends Satan by Guido Reni 1636

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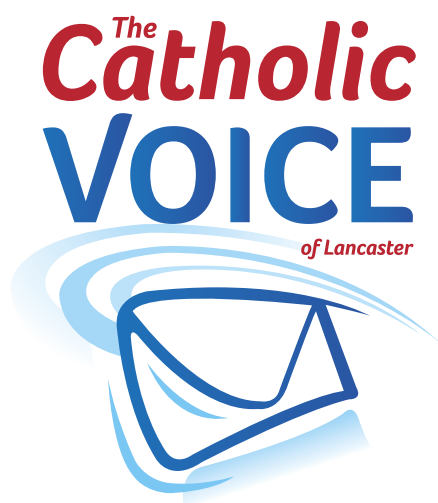
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Photo (below): The Care of Creation Group at Boarbank. The group consists of Sue Grubic, Faith and Justice Worker, Lancaster; Shirelle Cooper from Workington, Stephen Garsed, Diocesan Environmental Group, and Sister Philomena Grimley in the front, and Patrick Gardner, CAFOD Community Coordinator behind. Photo (right inset) Sister Margaret Atkins.



As September heralds a new season of creation, we take time to reflect on the joys of summer at Boarbank Hall, where happy memories and good works combined to make a very special occasion.

In the middle of the heatwave we experienced a beautiful temperate day on Saturday, July 18th, perfect weather for a meeting at Boarbank Hall in Cumbria, organised by the Lancaster Diocesan Environmental Group.

The purpose of the meeting was to encourage every parish in our diocese to find a representative willing to communicate with the group from time to time, to keep them informed on any local parish-based environmental news. So far these connections have not been made, in spite of various appeals, but that has not deterred the group. We know that the care for our common home is a moral imperative for our times, especially for us as Catholic Christians, inspired and motivated as we have been and are by Pope Francis, through his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, his Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* and the developments that have followed. In the morning, we began with a celebration of the Mass of Creation together with the community at Boarbank.

Then Sister Margaret Atkins guided us through a fascinating exploration of how the Catholic Catechism provides a wealth of connections between our faith and the mystery of Creation. Drawing on specific paragraphs in the Catechism she focused on:

- **Who is God?**
- **What does it mean to be created?**
- **What it means to be human and what we are called to be**
- **How should we interrelate with creation and how should we worship?**



Centenary Celebrations at Our Lady of Lourdes in Arnside, Cumbria

This year our parish of Our Lady of Lourdes Arnside celebrated its centenary. We decided to mark the event on 21st May with a Special Mass followed by a parish buffet supper at which people could mingle and chat.

Our celebrations were led by Bishop Paul Swarbrick, and we invited all our former clergy, who were available, to join with us. These clergy concelebrated the Mass with Bishop Paul and with our current clergy Canon Hugh Pollock and Fr Simon Marley. Unfortunately, Monsignor Patrick Mulvanny, Fr David Burns and Fr Peter Houghton were unable to attend the gathering, but we were delighted to welcome back Monsignor Frank Slattery, Canon Alf Hayes, Fr Philip Smith and Deacon George Bisset. We have very strong ecumenical links with the other Christian Churches in Arnside and we were also delighted to welcome Rev Andrew Norman, the Anglican Vicar of Arnside, and Rev Hannah Wallace the assistant priest in the same parish, and Rev Tiras Dainty-Share the Methodist minister in Arnside. A letter was also sent to Buckingham Palace advising and inviting H.M. the King of this event. We received a very pleasant reply from the Palace.

Pam Clarke and Sue Pyne, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Arnside

Care for Creation Day at Boarbank

By Sister Philomena Grimley SHCJ



After lunch we met outside for a tour of the garden and grounds where Sister Margaret showed us the different ways in which they are being adapted and tended to ensure ecological diversity. We then had an opportunity to share any examples or any information we might have of how care of the environment is happening in our local areas.

For example we learnt that Churches Together in Cumbria have made a Faith Covenant and the care of creation is very much a matter of concern amongst them.

Fran Wygladala from the Diocesan Education Service spoke of how our schools are committed to a climate action plan and she will be linking up with Sue Grubic, the Diocesan Faith and Justice worker, who has been asked by the Bishop to visit schools to inform and encourage environmental action. We all agreed on the importance of school and parish working together on these matters.

It was also heartening to know how some have engaged with CAFOD to earn the Live Simply Award and other CAFOD inspired initiatives.

Altogether it was a day that gave encouragement and inspiration to everyone present because we were resourced spiritually, learnt from each other and challenged to action. We left indebted to the community at Boarbank for offering us their wonderful hospitality and the beauty of their surroundings, where care for creation certainly abounds. *Philomena Grimley SHCJ*



Fr Chris Webb with Peter and family.



(Above) Father Peter Burns blesses the statue of John Southworth now residing at St Theresa's Parish in Cleveleys.
(Left) The prestigious Bene Merenti Award is presented to Peter Bradley for his outstanding and exceptional service to St Theresa's Parish, Cleveleys.
Pictures by Pearl Mina & Claire Gooden (Parishioner at St Theresa's).

Peter Bradley, longest serving sacristan is awarded The Bene Merenti Award

The prestigious Bene Merenti Medal has been awarded to Peter Bradley, a long serving and dedicated parishioner at St Theresa's RC Church in Cleveleys, Lancashire.

The Bene Merenti (or Benemerenti) medal is a papal honour awarded by Pope Leo XIV to members of the clergy and laity for long and exceptional service to the Catholic Church.

Peter, aged 95, is the longest serving sacristan in the parish of St Theresa's and was recognised for his outstanding service and lifelong dedication within the parish.

In a special Mass and celebration service, marking a new era with the official merging of St John Southworth RC Church Cleveleys joining together with parishioners of St Theresa's, Peter was surprised to be brought forward to receive the Bene Merenti medal. Peter was completely taken by surprise: "It was a total shock and surprise when I heard my name being called and I was completely shellshocked. I am

delighted to accept and cherish the Bene Merenti Medal and it is a real privilege and honour to serve in St Theresa's. I've been part of the parish life and community here all my life. I started serving here at 8 years old and can claim the record for the longest serving sacristan, as I am 95 years old now! Thank you to everyone who has made this a fantastic surprise and truly it is a great blessing."

Presiding Priest, Father Peter Burns presented Peter Bradley with his Bene Merenti Medal at a special Sunday morning Mass, in a packed church full of family, friends and fellow parishioners.

Father Peter also blessed the relics and statue of St John Southworth, which will now take up residency at St Theresa's, following a merger of the two parishes.

A beautiful buffet was served to all parishioners who joined Peter in the parish hall to celebrate the special occasion for him as a most beloved and dedicated parishioner. **Congratulations and God bless you, Peter!**

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MATTERS

YOUTH

Something for everyone this Autumn

With Jack Regan



Something for Everyone This Autumn
Jack Regan, Director of the Diocese of Lancaster Youth Service, on a record year, some new faces, a new youth group for West Cumbria, three very different retreats, and the Tour de France.

Autumn is always a full season at Castlerigg and we can't wait. The schools come back, the house is booked up week after week, and the team settle into the rhythm of retreat after retreat. This year, though, there are a few things happening beyond the normal run of school groups that I wanted to bring to your attention, because each of them is open to people across the diocese and beyond, and there is a good chance that at least one of them is for you or for someone you know. Before I get to those, a quick word on how things have been going more generally.

// A RECORD YEAR

It has been, quite simply, the busiest year in Castlerigg's recorded history. For the first time ever we have passed two hundred booked residential nights in a single year, with more than fifty schools coming through the doors alongside parishes, families, and groups of every kind. The house has been full most weeks, and it has had that good, lived-in feel that we love to see.

There have been some lovely moments along the way. We welcomed the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal for a

ten-day stay. We ran our first Family Retreat for a long time, with eight families booked in. And we have been out and about far more than in previous years, visiting parishes across the diocese, which has been a real joy and has led directly to some of what I will describe below.

We were also delighted in July to work with the ASCENT on a large event at Our Lady's school in Lancaster. The event was a Youth Alpha Holy Spirit Day but it was open to a lot of different groups and a good crowd turned up.

None of this is our doing alone. The prayers and generosity of people across the diocese sit behind all of it, and I am genuinely grateful. And of course, we serve a powerful and loving God!

// NEW FACES ON THE TEAM

This summer we also welcomed four new members to our ministry team: Michael, Jacob, Emilia, and Sam. They join us through our Youth Ministry Internship Scheme, living on site, serving on retreats, and being trained and formed as the next generation of youth ministers.

Watching a new intake settle in is one of the best parts of this job. They arrive a little nervous, and within a few weeks they are leading small groups and helping young people pray as though they have been doing it for years. Please do keep the four of them in your prayers as they

begin their time with us, and if you see them out on a parish visit, say hello. Now, on to what's coming up...

// SPARK COMES TO WORKINGTON

The first, and the one I am most excited about, is not at Castlerigg at all.

SPARK is our programme for planting parish youth groups in towns where there is currently nothing for young people. The idea is simple enough. We work with local priests and parishioners to build a small team, we train and support them, and together we launch a youth group that the parish itself can eventually run and sustain. The first SPARK group in the diocese has been running in Carlisle, and it has borne real fruit.

Now it is West Cumbria's turn. On Sunday 8th November we will be launching a new SPARK group in Workington, serving young people from across the west of the county. We have been working towards this for a while. Some readers may remember the ILLUMINATE evening we ran in Workington last year, which gave us an early sense of just how much appetite there is among young people in that part of the diocese.

If you live in West Cumbria and know a young person who might enjoy being part of something like this, please do get in touch with us and we will make sure they hear about the launch. And whether you are local or not, please pray for this

project. Starting something new is always a step of faith, and we would love to have the whole diocese behind it.

// A FAMILY RETREAT IN SEPTEMBER

Back at the Manor, our next Family Retreat runs from the 18th to the 20th of September. We ran our first family weekend earlier this year, with eight families booked in, and it went down wonderfully. The shape of the weekend is straightforward: the whole family comes away together, and we run separate streams for different ages, from the very little ones right up to the parents, so that everyone gets input pitched at their level. There is also plenty of time for families to head out and enjoy Keswick and the fells together.

One of the things I love about these weekends is watching parents get something for themselves. So much of family life, and honestly so much of parish life, asks parents to give and give. A weekend where mum and dad are fed too, spiritually as well as literally, is a rare thing, and the feedback from the first retreat suggested it was exactly what people needed.

Booking is open now at castleriggmanor.com/events

// A QUIET WEEK IN OCTOBER

From the 26th to the 30th of October we will be running a Quiet Week for adults. This is one of our newer ventures and it

does exactly what the name suggests. There is minimal input, no packed timetable, and no pressure to join in with anything. Instead there is space: to rest, to walk, to pray, to sit by the fire with a book, and simply to be. The house is at its best in late October, with the fells turning and the evenings drawing in, and it lends itself beautifully to this kind of retreat. More specifically there will be Mass and a talk each morning and then evening prayer every evening.

If the idea of a few unhurried days with the Lord in the Lake District appeals to you, I would encourage you to have a look. Details and booking are on our events page.

// STUDENTS AND YEAR 13s TOGETHER

Finally, our annual Catholic Students Retreat runs from the 20th to the 22nd of November, and this year we are doing something a little different with it. The weekend has always been for university students: a chance to step away from the busyness of term, meet other young Catholics, and spend some proper time with God. This year, for the first time, we are also opening it up to those in Year 13.

The thinking behind that is quite deliberate. The move from sixth form to university is one of the points where we lose the most young people from the life of the Church, and one of the

best protections against that is simply knowing other young Catholics before you arrive. A Year 13 who spends a weekend alongside current students, hears honestly about what chaplaincies and Catholic societies are like, and makes a few friendships along the way, arrives at university in September on a very different footing. So if you know a Year 13 who is thinking about university next year, or a current student who could do with a weekend in the Lakes, please point them our way. Booking is open now.

// AND LOOKING AHEAD: THE TOUR DE FRANCE

One more thing, and this one is a little further off but too good not to mention now. Next summer the Tour de France is coming to Keswick. The race begins in Edinburgh on Friday 2nd July 2027, with the opening stage finishing in Carlisle that evening, and then on Saturday 3rd July stage two sets off from Keswick itself, heading south past Thirlmere, Grasmere and Windermere on its way to Liverpool. The world's biggest annual sporting event, starting a stage ten minutes' walk from our front door. We still can't quite believe it.

Keswick will be absolutely buzzing that weekend, and we want to be part of it. We are now taking bookings for anyone who would like to stay at Castlerigg and watch the Tour, and alongside everything happening in the town we will be putting on events of our own here at the Manor over the weekend. Accommodation in Keswick for that weekend will disappear quickly, so if this appeals to you, or to the cycling fan in your life, I would honestly not hang about. Bookings are open now, and you can get in touch with us directly to secure a place.

// AND FINALLY

All the retreats above can be booked at castleriggmanor.com/events, and for the SPARK launch or the Tour de France weekend, just get in touch. You can always ring us on **017687 72711** or email director@castleriggmanor.co.uk with questions about any of it.

As ever, thank you for your support and your prayers. Whether it is a record year of bookings, a new team settling in, or a brand new youth group in West Cumbria, none of it happens without the people of this diocese behind us.



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Prestigious Oscar Romero Award For St Kentigern’s Primary School, Blackpool

St Kentigern’s Catholic Primary School, Blackpool, is proud to have become the first school in the Diocese of Lancaster to achieve the Participator Level of the Oscar Romero Award.

The Oscar Romero Award recognises schools that place Catholic Social Teaching at the heart of their mission and daily life, ensuring that Gospel values shape leadership, learning and service to others.

Following a rigorous assessment, the school received glowing feedback from assessors, who praised its commitment to ensuring that the principles of human dignity, solidarity, stewardship and the common good are central to every aspect of school life.

The report commended the school’s strategic leadership, describing its work to promote equality, challenge discrimination and uphold the dignity of every person as “an excellent example” of Catholic Social Teaching in action.

Assessors also recognised the school’s curriculum, which weaves Catholic Social Teaching throughout learning, alongside its commitment to becoming a School of Sanctuary. Practical initiatives, including

support for families, community projects and opportunities for pupils to live out their faith through service, were highlighted as powerful examples of Gospel values in action.

The report concluded that St Kentigern’s is “in an excellent place” to progress to the next stage of the award and congratulated the school on its outstanding achievement.

Headteacher Christine Murray said:

“We are delighted to become the first school in the Diocese of Lancaster to receive this award. It reflects the commitment of our pupils, staff, governors, parents and parish community to living out our faith each day. Catholic Social Teaching is at the heart of everything we do, and we are proud that our children are growing as compassionate leaders who put their faith into action through service, justice and care for others. We look forward to supporting other schools that wish to achieve the award.

“This award is a wonderful celebration of the school’s mission to ensure that every child flourishes in faith and becomes a positive force for good within the local and wider community.”

Mrs Christine Murray, Headteacher

Popular Whitehaven Headteacher retires - 34 years in education

St Benedict's Catholic High School has bid a heartfelt farewell to Headteacher Emma Jackson, who is retiring at the end of this academic year after 34 years of dedicated service to education and the local community.

During her time at St Benedict's Emma has played a pivotal role in shaping the school's success, championing the school virtues, nurturing generations of pupils and fostering a strong sense of community.

During her long career, Emma has also held the role of Headteacher at three Primary schools – Derwent Vale Primary, St Patrick's Catholic Primary School and also St Gregory's and St Patrick's Infants. She has also taught at Orgill Juniors, Silloth Primary, Seaton Juniors and Seascale Primary.

Since joining St Benedict's in 2019, Emma has overseen numerous achievements and events, including leading the school through COVID and all the challenges

that arose from that, and also guiding St Benedict's through two successful OFSTED inspections. Reflecting on her time at St Benedict's Emma said:

"The thing I will miss most about St Benedict's is the people; students, my amazing colleagues and the wider St Benedict's family. The school has been part of my life for many years and always will be."

"There are many memories. Some of my favourite ones are when the students have made me truly belly laugh, they can be so entertaining"

"But big events of course stay with me. The biggest challenge was bringing the school through COVID. Those were extremely challenging days, but I think it is when I saw our school community at its best. The building has been a challenge. None more so than when the roof blew off, but yet again we pulled together and came through it."

"We have had some immensely sad moments too. We lost two students in



Deputy Headteacher Steve Bridgman presenting Emma Jackson with her retirement gifts.

distressing circumstances, both shortly after they had left St Benedict's. Logan and Bailey are in my thoughts every day."

"We have been through two successful OFSTEDs together and an extremely successful Catholic inspection. I am proud and honoured to have led the team through those. I was a pupil here and to say I then became the headteacher is beyond anything I could have imagined. It has been the proudest achievement of my life."

Chair of Governors Kayleigh Daniels paid tribute to Mrs Jackson:

"On behalf of the Governing Body, we thank Emma for her exceptional leadership and dedicated service to St Benedict's."

"She has led with integrity, always placing the needs of our children first and seeing the dignity and potential in every person within our school community. Through her compassionate stewardship and unwavering commitment, she has shaped not only the school we are today but also

laid strong foundations for the future."

"The virtues Emma has embodied and nurtured across St Benedict's will be her enduring legacy, one that will continue to inspire and provide a strong platform for future generations to build upon."

"Thank you for all that you have given to St Benedict's. We wish you a restful, well-earned retirement and every happiness in the years ahead."

Speaking about her retirement, Emma added:

"My plans centre around my family. I will be doing some educational consultancy work, but most of my time will be spent with my partner travelling and with my four children and most importantly with my granddaughter. She will only know me as Gran - who used to be a Headteacher!!"

Everyone at St Benedict's wishes Mrs Jackson a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.



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John Bennett, Paul Briers, Christopher Houghton with Bishop Paul Swarbrick.

Three New Permanent Deacons for the Diocese!

The Diocese celebrated a joyful moment on Saturday 4 July when Bishop Paul Swarbrick ordained three men to the Permanent Diaconate at St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster.

Rev Paul Briers, Rev John Bennett and Rev Christopher Houghton now begin their ordained ministry in different parts of the Diocese. Rev Paul will serve at The Good Shepherd, Workington, Rev John at Holy Cross, Kirkham, and Rev Christopher at Our Lady of the Lakes and St Charles, Keswick.

Their ordination represents both the culmination of several years of formation and the beginning of a new life of service to the Church and the communities in which they have been called to minister.

The Permanent Diaconate is an ancient ministry with its roots in the earliest days of the Church. Deacons are ordained clergy, receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders, but their vocation is distinct from that of the priest. Traditionally, their ministry is described under three closely connected headings: the Word, the Liturgy and Charity.

At Mass the deacon has a particular responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel and may be called upon to preach. He assists the priest at the altar and helps the community in its worship.

Beyond the celebration of Mass, deacons may baptise, witness marriages, conduct funeral services and lead other forms of public prayer.

Yet the ministry of a deacon is not confined to the sanctuary. Service and charity belong at its very heart.

Deacons may visit the sick and housebound, support those experiencing hardship or loneliness, work with families and young people and become involved in the many charitable and pastoral activities of parish and diocesan life. In this way the deacon has a particular calling to make Christ the Servant visible within both the Church and the wider community.

Permanent deacons may be married and frequently continue in secular employment. They therefore bring to ordained ministry their experience of marriage and family life, the workplace

and the everyday concerns of the communities in which they live.

For Paul, John and Christopher, ordination followed several years of prayer, discernment, study and pastoral formation. That journey has also involved considerable support and commitment from their wives and families, parish communities and those responsible for their formation.

As our three new deacons begin their ministry in Workington, Kirkham and Keswick, they do so with the prayers and good wishes of the whole Diocese.

May their ministry bear abundant fruit and may their example encourage others to listen for God's call to serve His Church.

Priesthood Ordination Celebrations

Fr Stephen Bamber Ordained to the Priesthood

There was great joy in the Diocese on Saturday 27 June when Bishop Paul Swarbrick ordained Stephen Bamber to the Sacred Priesthood at St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster.

For Fr Stephen, the celebration marked the culmination of a journey of prayer, discernment and formation and the beginning of a new chapter of lifelong service to Christ and His Church.

Fr Stephen came to priestly formation with experience of life and work beyond the seminary. As a later vocation, he brought with him the perspective gained through his previous professional life and his experience of the wider world. Such experience can be invaluable in priestly ministry, where a priest accompanies

people through every stage of life and encounters them in moments of great happiness as well as times of uncertainty, suffering and loss.

Having discerned a call to priesthood, Fr Stephen undertook the demanding process of seminary formation. This included study and formation at the Venerable English College in Rome, together with pastoral experience in parishes within the Diocese of Lancaster. These years of academic, spiritual, human and pastoral formation prepared him for the responsibilities he now assumes as a priest.

Priesthood is fundamentally a life of service. A priest is called to proclaim the Gospel and teach the Catholic faith, to

celebrate the Eucharist and the other sacraments, to reconcile, comfort and accompany God's people and to share in the pastoral leadership of the Church.

He will be present at some of the most significant moments in people's lives: at baptism and marriage, in illness and bereavement, and week after week around the altar as the Christian community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist.

At the heart of the priest's sacramental ministry is his calling to act in persona Christi – in the person of Christ. His vocation is therefore not simply to undertake a series of duties, but to seek increasingly to become a shepherd after the example of Christ himself.

Fr Stephen will begin his priestly ministry in a particularly significant setting. From 1 September he joins the clergy of the Cathedral Parish of St Peter and the Lancaster Martyrs, serving alongside Cathedral Dean Fr John Millar and the Cathedral clergy. Having been ordained at St Peter's in June, his return to the Cathedral as one of its priests provides a fitting beginning to his ordained ministry.

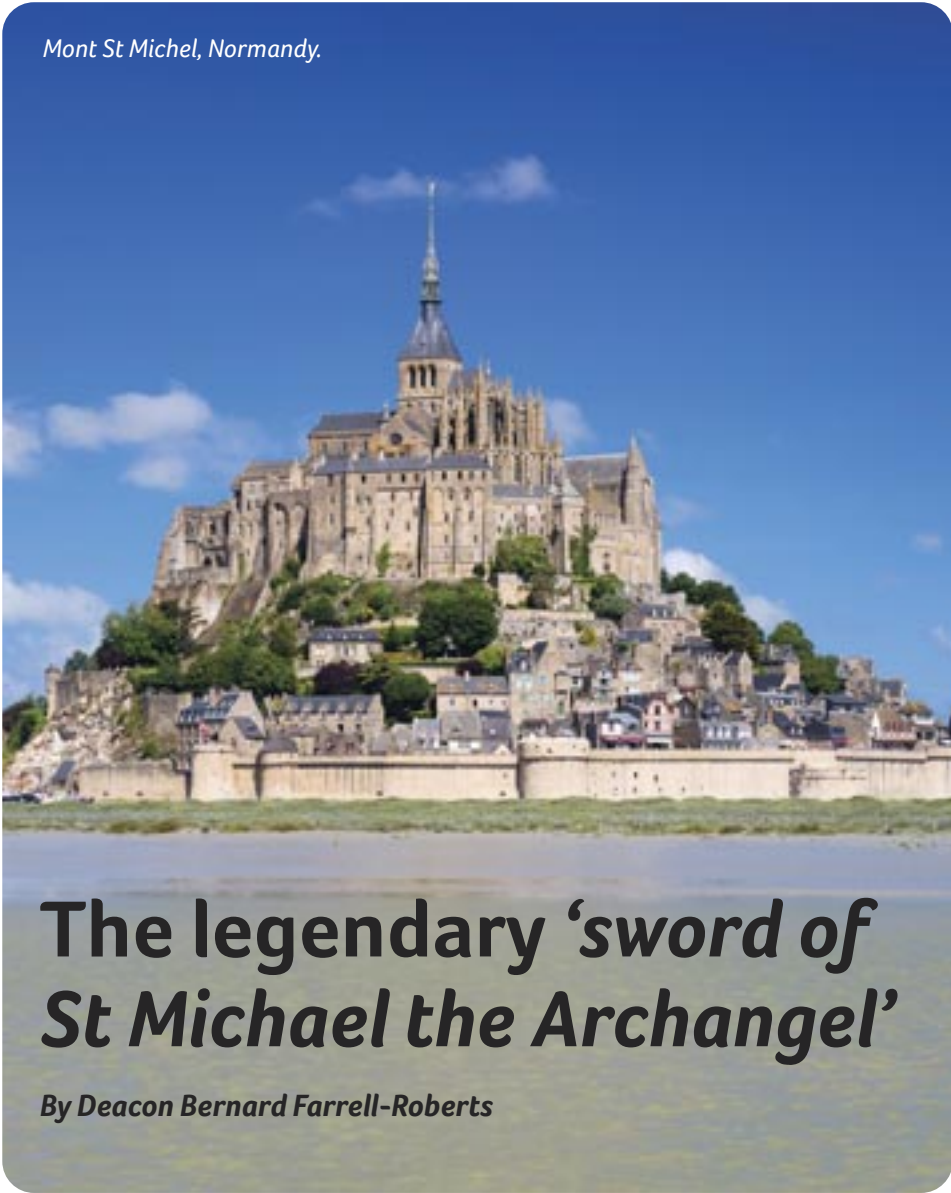
As Fr Stephen takes up his first appointment, the prayers and good wishes of the Diocese go with him. May God grant him many happy and fruitful years of priestly ministry, and may his example encourage others to listen generously for God's call in their own lives.

Andrew Wygladala





Sacra di Michele, Italy.



Mont St Michel, Normandy.

The legendary ‘sword of St Michael the Archangel’

By Deacon Bernard Farrell-Roberts



St. Mary's Catholic Academy



Junior Open Evening

21st September 2026 - 17:15 to 19:45

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St. Mary's Catholic Academy



Sixth Form Open Evening

8th October 2026 - 17:30 to 19:30

St. Walburga's Road, Blackpool, FY3 7EQ
www.st-mary.blackpool.sch.uk instagram.com/sixthformsmca

Have you ever heard of the Legendary Sword of St. Michael the Archangel?

Well, if you haven't you are one of many! However, the story behind this truly amazing phenomenon is well worth knowing. According to legend, St. Michael the Archangel sent the Devil to hell by striking him with his sword, and when he did so he marked this feat by leaving on earth an incredible straight line of shrines that represent his blow, a line that stretches all the way from Ireland to Israel!

The legendary Sword of St. Michael: 7 Sanctuaries linked by a completely straight line

This mysterious imaginary straight line passes through seven monasteries. Can this be a simple coincidence? Not likely, as these seven sanctuaries are located a very long way away from each other, and yet they are perfectly aligned. The details of this alignment are quite astonishing: the three most important sites: Mont Saint Michel in France; Saint Michael's Abbey in Val de Susa in Italy; and the Sanctuary of Monte Sant'Angelo in Gargano, Italy, are all the same distance away from each other. And if this is not surprising enough, this Sacred Line is also perfectly aligned with the sunset on the day of the Northern Hemisphere's Summer Solstice!

Skellig Michael, Ireland

The line begins in Ireland, on an island, where Archangel Michael is said to have appeared to Saint Patrick, while helping him to liberate Ireland from the devil. This is the first monastery of the line,

located on Skellig Michael (*Michael's Rock*).

Saint Michael's Mount, England

The line then heads south and stops in England on St. Michael's Mount, a Cornish islet which, at low tide, is joined physically to the mainland. Here, St. Michael is said to have spoken to a group of fishermen.

Mont-Saint-Michel, Normandy, France

The sacred line then goes to France, to another island, Mont Saint-Michel, another place where St. Michael is said to have appeared. The beauty of this sanctuary and the bay in which it is located, off the coast of Normandy, makes it one of the most visited tourist sites in France, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979. Since the time of the Gauls, this island has been considered mystical. In 709, the Archangel appeared to Saint Aubert, urging him to build a church on the rock, and the resultant Benedictine abbey was completed in the year 900.

Sacra di San Michele, Italy

The line then takes us 1,000 kilometres to the Val de Susa in Italy, to the 'Sacra di San Michele', another of the Benedictine monasteries dedicated to Saint Michael. The construction of the abbey began around the year 1000, with new structures being added over the years, including an inn for the numerous pilgrim visitors.

Sanctuary of Monte Sant'Angelo, Mount Gargano, Italy

Another thousand kilometres away

Symi Monastery, Greece.



we reach Puglia, where a formerly inaccessible cavern became a sacred place - the 'Monte Sant' Angelo' Sanctuary. This was founded here in the year 490 when St. Michael appeared to San Lorenzo Maiorano.

Symi's Monastery, Greece

From Italy we travel to the sixth sanctuary, this time in Greece, on the island of Symi. This monastery houses a three-meter-high statue of Archangel Michael, one of the largest in the world.

Mount Carmel Monastery, Haifa

The Sacred Line ends in Israel, at the Mount Carmel Monastery. It is in Haifa, a holy place where the Catholic sanctuary dates back to the 12th century.

All the monasteries are dedicated to St. Michael. He appeared at Monte San Angelo in 490 and again in 663, and then at Mont St. Michel to Bishop Aubert in 708. Sacra di San Michele was built at the request of the Archangel in 983, having appeared to the hermit St. Giovanni Vincenzo. St. Patrick saw St. Michael above the island of Skellig Michael as he was exorcizing Ireland.

Taxiarchis is home of a miraculous icon of Michael, which is said to have protected the monastery from Muslim invasion when the archangel also appeared to the enemy. Finally, traditionally Mt. Carmel was a place of spiritual battle where Elijah wielded his sword against the prophets of Baal, St. Michael having given Elijah the thunder he took away from Satan. There is still a Carmelite community of nuns living there.

The key to the straight connecting line is thought to be its relationship with the Summer Solstice. Many pagan shrines, such as Stonehenge, were built to highlight the movement of the sun and moon, idolising and 'harnessing the mystical power' of the sun on the longest day of the year. All the shrines along the sword of St. Michael were originally pagan sites of worship. The island in Cornwall was dedicated to Celtic god Lugh, and Mont. St. Michel was dedicated to Mithras (a cult of Roman soldiers) and was named 'Tomb Mount'. The Greek monastery was built over the site of a temple to Apollo, who also had other temples along the sword of St. Michael. The locations of the monasteries are all on high places - ideal for tracking the sun's path. This "taking over" of holy days and places when Christians converted pagans was and is commonplace worldwide, as the Church reclaimed important sites and dedicated them to the worship of the one true God. For Christians the sun and stars proclaim the glory of God, but no longer lead to idolatrous worship and human sacrifice, which had been a custom connected to the solstice sites.

St. Michael had a clear role in reclaiming the solstice for the glory of God and removing its connection to the enemy, appearing at many of these sites. We are called to help him in this task. In our own lives we should ask St. Michael to guard, protect, and help us as we join him in the battle against evil.

**St Michael The Archangel Pray For Us
Feast Day 29th September**

Christopher Costello from the Knights of Columba Lancaster is delighted to announce a very special Heritage Open day on Saturday 10th October 2026.

**All Welcome to
Heritage
Open Day**

*hosted by the
Knights of Columba
Lancaster*

We would love people from all over the Diocese to come along to support the heritage open day.

We are open from 1pm-5pm at St Peter's Cathedral in Lancaster for a Heritage Open Day in collaboration with the Knights of St Columba Lancaster. It's free but we will be taking donations on the day for a number of causes including the restoration works in the spire. We have lots to see and it will be a great day of interesting conversation and history.



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The Sacrament of Marriage



Spirituality Now
With Ursula Walker

“Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of “the Wedding feast of the Lamb”. Scripture speaks throughout of marriage, and its “mystery”, its institution and the meaning God has given to it, its origin and its end, its various realizations throughout the history of salvation, the difficulties arising from sin and its renewal “in the Lord” in the New Covenant of Christ and the Church” (CCC 1602)

and understanding. It requires respect and caring for each other and some compromise with the problems life can throw at you, as you raise your family. Also have a sense of humour.”
David Ball, St John’s, Poulton.

My own experience of marriage although quite short compared to some, was one of unconditional love. I felt that I was really loved for who I was and I grew into a new person, in confidence and belief in myself. Mick showed me God’s unconditional love and this is something I will always be grateful for.

It is interesting, I think, that in the Sacrament of Marriage (*in the Latin Church*) it is not the priest who administers the Sacrament but rather the man and woman getting married – “as ministers of Christ’s grace, (they) mutually confer upon each other the sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church.” (CCC 1622)

Marriage is an everyday thing. We live out our marriage every day when we try to love each other as God wants us to do.

It is hard at times, when we feel we have lots of pressures and worries but these need to be shared. Marriage is about sharing, sharing everything – the good and the bad, the happy and sad times.

“Marriage – love is the reason. Lifelong friendship is the gift. Kindness is the cause. ‘Till death do us part is the length” Fawn Weaver.

Ursula Walker, Diocesan Spiritual Rep
Spiritualrep@lrcd.org.uk
07312129900

I asked a few parishioners in different parishes what their experience of marriage was like.....

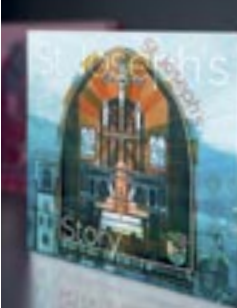
“A Catholic marriage for us brings companionship, faith, forgiveness, and hope. It gives the strength to face life together while growing closer not only to each other, but to God.”

The Bible describes the beauty of this unity: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”

“Love never fails...” 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
Siobhan and Tony Tweedale, St. Kents, Blackpool.

Monica and Keith from St. John Vianneys, Blackpool, said “Our Catholic faith has kept us together for just over 30 years – through the struggles of life. He binds us together.”

“After over 60 years we have found a successful marriage to be one of love



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What's on... September & October

BOARBANK ++++++

Re-Creation! 1-6/8th October

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Credo 23-25/26th October

Follow up to Our Lady in Latin, on the Creed and the Mass.

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Tel: 015395 32288 / www.boarbankhall.co.uk

HYNING HALL ++++++

Explore your "inner space" through "outer space" A retreat for Science Fiction fans!

Friday, Sep 18, 2026 5:30 PM and Sunday, Sep 20, 2026 2:00 PM

Explore Inner space through the medium of Outer space! The retreat will focus on classic science fiction films, books and series etc. to explore theological and spiritual ideas. The weekend will be led by Sr. Michaela.

Walking with Mary - led by Donna Worthington

Thursday, Sep 24, 2026 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Walking with Mary... Mary, you stood your ground, you walked single-minded along that sapphire-path. Barefoot, you walked on, steel-blue metal in your eyes. You. Bearer of God, full of your own light...
£35 with cooked lunch and refreshments provided.

Ecumenical flute retreat (Repeat of August event)

Sunday, Oct 4, 2026 5:30 PM and Friday, Oct 9, 2026 2:30 PM

Ecumenical flute retreat. Repeat of the week in August. See the link for the details: www.bernardine.org/fluteretreat2026

Hynning Hall, Monastery of Our Lady of Hynning, Warton, nr Carnforth, Lancashire, LA5 9SE. Tel: 01524 732 684 / www.bernardine.org



A Walk with God from Hynning

'The world is charged with the grandeur of God' - Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ

This Sunday afternoon walk will offer the opportunity to experience the words of the Jesuit poet first hand as we walk through the beautiful countryside around Hynning Monastery. This retreat is for those who love a good walk (and are able to walk around 5 miles) with fine views - which inevitably involves some gentle hills! There will be time to chat and time to be silent. There will be stops along the way for guided prayer to help you to take stock of what is happening in your daily life, to talk to God about these things and return home refreshed. The guided prayers will be drawn from the Ignatian tradition which invites an encounter with God who is found in all things and a deeper relationship with Jesus who walks alongside us. Led by the Jesuit Institute: Sarah Young, Stephen Hoyland & JI Companion Ginny Newsham. Date and Times: Sunday 27th September 2026 13.00-17.00hrs. Please aim to arrive between 13.00 and 13.15 when the event starts. Location: Hynning Monastery, Warton, Nr Carnforth. Lancashire. LA5 9SE.

www.jesuitinstitute.org/events/a-walk-with-god-from-hynning

DAY of RENEWAL

Led by Fr. Stephen Bamber

Fr. Stephen Bamber was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Lancaster on 27 June 2026. Before entering formation, he worked in the drug and alcohol treatment sector in a variety of roles, including training and programme development. He has recently been appointed Assistant Priest at the Cathedral Parish of St Peter and the Lancaster Martyrs.



"Being lost, being found."

Saturday 3rd October 2026

10am. to 4pm.
the day starts with Mass at 10am.
at **St Clare's Church (Parish Hall)**
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Family Fast Day Appeal:

Grow food. Provide meals. Help children learn.

"We are getting more energy."
— Tayla



Tayla and Kiki drink clean water from their school's water taps

Photo credit: Cynthia Matonhodze.



Become a CAFOD School Volunteer

Do you have a passion for faith, justice, and inspiring young people?

CAFOD is seeking volunteers to visit local Catholic schools to lead assemblies and workshops about our work and mission. Help children and young people learn how they can make a positive difference in the world. Full training and support provided. For further information, please contact Anna Letizia on: 07710 094449 or email: aletizia@cafod.org.uk

Kiki (right) and her friend harvest vegetables at their school, where a solar-powered piped water system is helping them grow food for nourishing school meals.
Photo credit: Cynthia Matonhodze

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Tayla is 12 and dreams of becoming a doctor. In northern Zimbabwe, your support can help children like Tayla have enough food and drinking water to stay healthy, stay in school and have the chance to learn.

Drought has left communities struggling with food and water shortages. Before a solar-powered water pump came to Tayla's school, she walked long distances to collect water from a stream. Without enough food or water, she became tired and struggled to concentrate in class. Sometimes, she missed school altogether.

With support from CAFOD's local Caritas partners, children were given school meals to make sure they had enough food and energy to learn, while a longer-term way for the school to provide these meals was put in place.

Now, a solar-powered water pump provides safe water for drinking and handwashing. It also gives the school water to grow vegetables and raise fish, helping the school provide nutritious food for children's meals throughout the year.

This means your support can do more than help children eat today. It can help schools build a sustainable way to provide

food and clean water into the future. With enough to eat and drink, children can stay in school, concentrate in class and keep learning.

This is faith in action. But there are still children waiting for this support. At Nyamuzeya Primary School, acting headteacher Edward says that the arrival of water would be "heaven on earth".

For CAFOD's Family Fast Day, join parishes around the diocese who are putting their faith into action by holding collections, soup lunches and coffee mornings. Thank you for coming together to build a better world for everyone.

Donate today to help more children stay in school with the food, safe water and energy they need to learn. Give online at cafod.org.uk/envelope, scan the QR code or call 0303 303 3030 to help schools provide nutritious food for children for years to come. Thank you for everything you do to support Family Fast Day Friday 2 October this Harvest.

By fasting, giving and praying together this Harvest, we can continue to support our sisters and brothers around the world, transforming lives and creating a world full of joy and hope.

Patrick Gardner, CAFOD Lancaster



Tribute to Father Val Farrell

Rest In Peace

A touching tribute by Fr Anthony Keefe, fellow priest and former staff member at St Joseph's College Junior Seminary.

I first met Fr Valentine "Val" Farrell in the summer of 1975, when he was one of four priests serving at St Augustine's, Preston. I had been assigned there for my summer diaconate placement and Val immediately proved a welcoming presence – not least through the loan of his push-bike, on which I travelled around Frenchwood and beyond.

By the end of that summer, Val had moved to St Joseph's College, Upholland, to join the Religious Education staff. As I helped carry his belongings into his rather gloomy rooms, he jokingly asked how long it would be before I followed him. Twelve months later I did – taking over those very rooms. Val's first words to me were: "Do you want to borrow a push-bike?"

During our six years together, I came to appreciate Val's remarkable gifts as priest, teacher and colleague. His RE teaching combined scholarship, inventiveness and wit. I cannot imagine that a lesson with Fr Farrell was ever dull.

His celebration of the liturgy was equally memorable. His deep understanding of Scripture and gift for communication could hold the attention of a chapel full of teenage boys while also giving his fellow priests much food for thought and prayer.

Val enjoyed football and cricket, but photography was a particular passion. Years later, he delighted followers of the Upholland College Facebook page with photographs from his teaching days.

After nine years at Upholland, Val became parish priest of Holy Family, Blackpool, where he served for 21 years. He also became editor of this newspaper, producing a publication that was lively and occasionally controversial; Val was never afraid to challenge authority when he believed an injustice had been done.

Inventiveness, creativity, scholarship and wit characterised Val's priestly life.

Those of us privileged to know him will remember them with gratitude and affection, as we pray that he may now enjoy the fullness of life in God's Kingdom.

Fr Anthony Keefe

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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Developments for the new Lancaster Diocese Centenary Book are gaining pace and a Centenary Book committee spokesperson is delighted to update readers of The Catholic Voice of Lancaster:

"Dear readers of The Catholic Voice of Lancaster, you may be pleased to learn that the manuscript for the new book is now with the publisher, with whom we are maintaining regular contact and finalising the last details.

It is the Bishop's intention to hold a launch in October and we will keep everyone informed as soon as possible.

We are very excited and for those who are not aware of the history and reason for the new book I shall explain the background briefly.

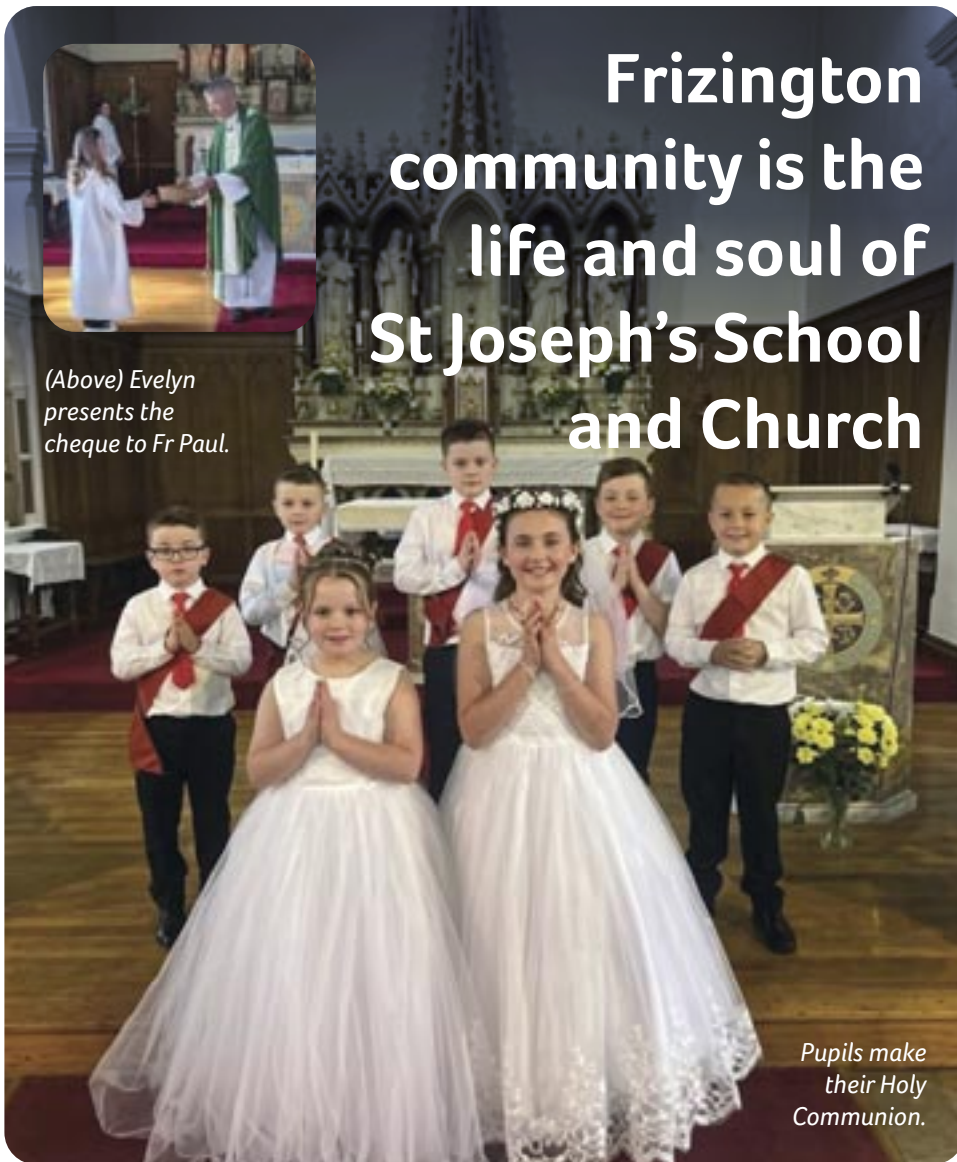
Wishing to celebrate the Centenary of the creation of the Diocese of Lancaster in 1924, Bishop +Paul Swarbrick assembled a team of local historians led by Professor Michael Mullet. The aim was a book which leads the reader through the ages from the origins of Christianity through the Reformation to the Diocese we know today. It is written in a style which is accessible to everyone.

Such a sweeping document cannot encompass everything but it presents a series of snapshots of the development of our faith from the beginnings to today which we can all recognise.

It deserves a place on the bookshelf of every parishioner; there to be dipped into as an interesting read; there for the historian looking for inspiration."

Centenary Book Launch gains momentum

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(Above) Evelyn presents the cheque to Fr Paul.

Pupils make their Holy Communion.

The former mining village of Frizington is now ranked among the ten most deprived communities in England. But at the heart of it great things are happening driven by the efforts of St Joseph's School and Church.

The mission statement of St Joseph's School is 'We care, we belong, we learn together in faith'. This is being put into action across all areas of the school, parish and wider community life.

The Caritas group of the parish has been making an appeal for 'Sightsavers', an important and effective charity. The appeal was needing a boost so Fr Paul mentioned it at the end of the masses. At St Joseph's one of the altar servers, Evelyn, picked this up. When she returned to St Joseph's school she asked if school could try and raise something towards the charity. By the end of the week £90 had been raised by the pupils. Evelyn presented the collection to Fr Paul.

This is a good illustration of the way school and church are working together. Only a few weeks previously seven pupils of St Joseph's made their First Holy Communion, prepared in the parish with close school involvement.

Taking the lead in much of the activity in school and community is Head Annette Savage. St Joseph's Community Hall is the

hub of many different things involving the wider community.

A Frizington Walkers group sets out from the hall every Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening - everyone is welcome, you might find a three-year-old toddler next to an 83 year old.

A Community Food Pantry is run from the hall on a simple bring-and-collect basis. Food that might have gone to waste finds its way to families who need it. Coffee mornings are arranged as well as film nights. There are drop-in sessions with the local PCSO and safe spaces for families to watch football together. So much of this is inter-generational, something often missing in modern life.

Concern for the environment - finding inspiration in Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* - has motivated the school's 'Eco Warriors'. Growing vegetables, running regular litter picks across the village and this term planting trees in the school playground alongside parents, grandparents and parishioners.

Frizington, though designated a 'deprived community', is proud and has its own distinct character. The church and school are expressing Gospel values in many and varied ways bringing new hope and life to the community, pulling together the resources and riches which have always been there.

Fr Paul Johnstone

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