

St. Clare's, Fulwood.

PARISH MAGAZINE



AUTUMN / WINTER 2015/16

A YEAR OF MERCY

On December 8th, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady (also the anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council) Pope Francis will inaugurate an *Extra-Ordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy*. (See the logo on the front page). It has long been a tradition of the Church to hold a Jubilee Year every 50 years. This comes straight from the Jewish Biblical tradition. It was a time when debts were written off. According to Leviticus, slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven, and the mercies of God would be particularly manifest. (Leviticus 25:8-13). Pope Francis announced that he is convoking a jubilee year to be called the Holy Year of Mercy, saying he has, "Thought often about how the Church can make more evident its mission of being a witness of mercy," Pope Francis also said, "I am convinced that the whole church -- that has much need to receive mercy because we are sinners -- will find in this jubilee the joy to rediscover and render fruitful the mercy of God, with which we are all called to give consolation to every man and woman of our time. Let us not forget that God pardons and God pardons always, let us never tire of asking for forgiveness." He also entrusted this Year to the Mother of Mercy, "Because she looks to us with her gaze and watches over our way." During this Year there will be many initiatives in the parish, the diocese and beyond to celebrate the Mercy of God. These will be announced as they become known. What is known is that there will be an Advent Service of Reconciliation at St Clare's with many Confessors on *Friday 18th December at 7pm*. In the meantime it may be worth dwelling upon the Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy: To feed the hungry; To give drink to the thirsty; To clothe the naked; To harbour the harbourless; To visit the sick; To ransom the captive; To bury the dead. Spiritual: To instruct the ignorant; To counsel the doubtful; To admonish sinners; To bear wrongs patiently; To forgive offences willingly; To comfort the afflicted; To pray for the living and the dead.

To begin the Diocesan celebrations a Solemn Mass will be celebrated in our Cathedral on Tuesday 8th December at 7.00pm. The (Holy) *Door of Mercy* at the Cathedral will be blessed and opened on Sunday 13th December at 6.30pm - followed by the celebration of Mass.

As you would expect by this time in the year, all the usual programmes are up and running. The First Confession Course will soon be over and will, in February, morph into the First Communion Course. At this time the Confirmation Course is grinding into gear and the Journey in Faith Group (those considering entry into the Catholic Church) has been operating since September.

But now the Holy Season of Advent is soon to break upon us. I always regret that Advent is overshadowed by Christmas. It would not be so bad if it were just the holy season of Christmas that did the overshadowing but, in truth, what relegates Advent to side lines is commercial Christmas. Commercial Christmas begins usually around the beginning of October and ends with the closing of the last cash drawer on December 24th. But for us who are Christians, Catholic in particular, Advent is truly a gift from God, a time to prepare for the feast of Christ's birth; but even for us, it can be a time swallowed up by the fripperies of all that must be done at this time of year. For those who are serious about their faith this opportunity will be grasped chiselling out some time each day for prayer and quiet reflection. It is not too late to book in at Tabor or Hynning Hall for a quiet half day. The character most associate with this season is St John the Baptist; his cry of, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord,' needs to resonate in every Christian heart at this time of year. And no doubt, the Junior children in our school will set the tone when they hold their Advent Service in church on the first Monday of Advent.

THE CENACOLO COMMUNITY

This parish has supported the above for a number of years so it may be time for a reminder as to what Cenacolo is.

An Italian nun, over a 12 year period, watched the youth of her city and saw the desperate plight that some of them were in: some on the streets, some drug addicts, some both. God put it into her heart to reach out to these young men but it took 12 years before her superiors would allow her to embark upon this adventure which today we know as the Cenacolo Community.

This nun, Sr Elvira, was leased a dreadful, dilapidated property by the City Council in the northern Italian city of Saluzzo. That house was

opened in 1983. The house itself became a metaphor for the lives of the young men who came to the Community, for they too, in many cases were ramshackle and dilapidated, and they too, like the house were very much in need of restoration.

This work of the Holy Spirit makes present in a profound way the love of the heart of God for the youth of today. And in a special way for those on the periphery of society. The Cenacolo Community has grown exponentially over these years. The Boys' Houses multiplied, and Girls' Houses were later opened and later still, a couple of 'mixed' Houses were opened. In Cenacolo priestly vocations were born as was a new congregation of Religious Sisters: Sisters of the Resurrection. After a few years in the Community some of the boys and girls feel that they want to 'give something back' to the Community and many of them travel to one of the Mission Houses in South America or Liberia where they care for children rescued from the streets.

Throughout the world there are (at present) 61 Cenacolo Houses or Fraternities. The one at Dodding Green in Cumbria was opened in 2005 when 9 men arrived to establish the Community there in the ancient chapel and presbytery. Over these 10 years many young men of many nationalities have gone through the House. Most of them are reforming drug addicts, others are disaffected, disenchanted with the way of life in the world and are looking to find a new way of living. Cenacolo is not a 'rehab centre' but rather a 'School of Life.' It has 3 main pillars: Friendship, Work and Prayer. Many of those who enter the Community have spent many years in a bad way in society. Therefore, these ills will take time to heal and cannot be addressed within a few weeks. The Community proposes up to 3 years to the young men so as to learn how to be the men (and women) God is calling them to be.

One of the rules of the Community is that no state benefits are accepted. The men live off 'Divine Providence.' They eat whatever food is given them, they wear whatever clothes are handed in. They rely upon donations to pay the utility bills etc.

This parish each week provided gifts of food and household goods, via the box in the church porch for the brothers. The parish enables me to spend half a day a week at the House hearing confessions and celebrating Holy Mass. This they call 'spiritual providence' and, together with your payers, is the support from which they most benefit.

It is important that this work of the Holy Spirit is well supported by our prayers.

ANOTHER WAY

I read recently that in a remote area of China there were villages and small settlements where, because of persecution, Catholics did not see a priest for months, or in many cases, even for years. When it became safe a priest eventually returned, and he was amazed that the faith had not only survived and remained strong, but had reached villages that had not even seen a missionary. Asking how this had come about he was told that it was quite simple. 'If we find a village with no faith we send in a good Catholic family to live there, and soon the people are converted'.

Now, I find that story disturbing. Why? Because in all my 70 plus years of life I have certainly not managed to convert a village; I haven't converted my neighbours; and, sadly, not even my own family. These Chinese people who passed on such a fervent faith were obviously living gospels. A gospel that could be seen and touched and heard before ever a word was preached. It makes me ashamed. It makes think that once again I shall have to begin anew.

But of course we're always doing this, beginning again; as a people, as a church, as individuals. It's a constantly recurring theme in the bible. 'They will have to go back to Egypt'; meaning, they have got it wrong, they will have to begin again.

I suppose I shouldn't be too discouraged; throughout the ages God's people have 'got it wrong'. And we are still getting it wrong. Perhaps it always will be so.

In Our Lord's day the Temple altars were running with the blood of thousands of sacrifices, the incense was billowing out in great clouds. The Court of Israel was some 150 feet high. One bronze door alone needed 20 men to open it. The Temple was staffed by several thousand men and the noise of trumpets and the sound of prayers could be heard all day long. All, it seemed, was ready for the arrival of the Great Messiah who, with sword in hand and vast armies would slaughter all enemies and unbelievers.

But God crept in, by the back door almost. Someone left a stable door open, and He slipped in. And they didn't see Him or recognise Him.

'No', he said, looking around and shaking His head, 'Not that way. We'll have to begin again'. But from where do we begin? Well, He shows us; in St. John's gospel. We begin from the feet upwards.

I remember many years ago a friend saying of her parish, 'there aren't enough feet being washed'. And she was right.

Time and time again, all through scripture, perhaps in different ways to each generation God says, 'no, you'll have to begin again; go back to Egypt'.

And you know, it's often when we think we've got it right, got it made, when we're sitting back smugly and securely, that we're most wrong.

Looking back to my childhood in the late 40's and early 50's I think we Catholics really thought we had it made; we could sit back and bask, because we had it made. Big city centre churches with 5 or 6 or more Masses on Sundays; crowds pouring out from one Mass and more streaming in to the next. Processions, liturgies, incense and domino drives. Oh! It was wonderful.

And it was all good, very good. But maybe, just maybe, amongst it all we somehow lost sight of the poor man who washed feet; the man who owned nothing, and knelt to wash feet; like a slave; the wounded one; the humble one.

Yes, I shall have to go back; back to the gospel; to read it again; to learn to live it. To become the gospel for those who have not read it and may never read it. WJW

NEWS FROM ST CLARE'S SCHOOL

Some important changes have been taking place over the last months at our Parish Primary School. Already announced was that Mr McKeown was to retire. That has now taken place and Miss Scott, the new deputy, is now in situ. Hot on the appointment of Miss Scott came the surprise news of Mr Purcell's departure. He has been Head for 17 years but now he is to move to pastures new as an Advisor for the Local Education Authority. He will step down at the end of the Autumn Term. At the beginning of the new term (January) our new Head teacher, Mrs Anne Charnley will take

up the reins of office. A brief autobiographical note may be read in the section below *From the Website*.

The Governors too, have been juggled around and now the only outstanding appointment is for an elected parent governor.

DO THEY STILL DO THAT?

That was the question I was asked a few weeks ago by a lapsed Catholic about the Sacrament of Confession. The answer, of course, is yes! Confession is probably more popular now and more public (!) than any time in the recent past. Really? Yes, but sadly not Sacramental Confession.

People seem to be queuing up to make confessions either on some daytime TV show, or to a psychologist, or counsellor, or at the hair dressers, or to a barman etc etc etc.

STORY: About twenty years ago, whilst I was Chaplain at a large District General Hospital, a patient asked to make his Confession, he told me he was attending a sort of self-help group run by a local psychiatrist. It transpired that the psychiatrist had said that if there were any Catholics in the group they should try to go to Confession before the next group meeting. The man made his Confession and a few months later I spotted the psychiatrist in the dining room at the hospital. I related the incident and ask why. The psychiatrist, who turned out to be Jewish, said that apart from any spiritual benefit, Confession was a good thing psychologically speaking. He said that everyone from time to time had a need to unburden themselves to another trustworthy person, but more than that, to actually hear that they have been forgiven is a great consolation.

But the Church has been saying that for 2000 years. Indeed, Jesus came to unburden us, to heal and free us. The Church is a mother who wants only what is best for her children, she knows that it may be painful, embarrassing or uncomfortable to humble ourselves by confessing our sins; but she also knows that that is the best way to be restored to wholeness. And that is why the practice of General Absolution is forbidden; it may seem a good thing but, in truth, it is selling people short, not allowing them to unburden themselves and feel the full force of God's healing love. All the Sacraments are encounters with Christ, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a most beautiful encounter with Christ the

Healer, who has bourn the weight of our sins on the cross and who longs to do nothing more than to relieve us of our burden of sin.

THROUGH THE REGISTERS

We send our congratulations to the families of the following who were baptised in the parish recently: Frankie Gibson, Evie Dickinson, Ryder Stantiford, Tayla Finley & Freddie Wilkinson-Strange. We offer our condolences to the families of Tom Clarkson, Barbara Pye, Margaret Holden, Martin O'Malley & Jack Burton whose funerals have taken place from here in recent months.

FROM THE DIOCESE AND OTHER SOURCES

APPOINTMENTS:

Father Peter Houghton is now Parish Priest of Our Lady of Appleby and Kirkby Stephen with effect from 1 September 2015. Father Jim Burns is fine and awaiting a new appointment. Father John Millar is now Director of On-going Formation for Priests in succession to Canon Peter Hart.

We welcome to our Diocese shortly Father (Ezeji) Herbert Olechukwu and Father (Agulefo) John Mark Ifezim from the Diocese of Awka, Nigeria who will be on loan to us for the next three years. After a period of induction they will receive appointments within the Diocese. Welcome, too, to Canon Vianney Poucin de Wouilt of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest (newly-ordained) who has recently been appointed as assistant priest at St Walburge's Shrine Church, Preston. Blackpool Deanery: Father Peter Sharrock as Dean, Canon Bob Dewhurst as Sub-Dean; The Lakes & Furness Deanery Canon Paul Embery as Dean, Father Bob Halshaw as Sub-Dean; Secretary to the Council of Priests

Father Paul Harrison Secretary to the Council of Priests in succession to Father Philip Smith.

A warm welcome too, to our new religious communities: The Holy Family Sisters of the Needy - Sister Mary Chidalu and Sister Chinedum Nwadike, from Nigeria based at the former Mercy Convent, Kirkby Street, Maryport. The Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus – Sister Harriet Temitope Thomas and Sister Vivian Nneka Onyeneho, from Nigeria to be resident at the Presbytery, Our Lady and St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge,

Carlisle. The Congregation of the Mother of Carmel – Sister Anoop Kokkadan and Sister Rogit Chakkalakkal, from Kerala, India to be resident at Blessed Sacrament Presbytery, Preston. The Sisters of St Paul of Chartres - Sister Shienrose (Agnes) La Torre and Sister Ursula (Jai Suk) Lee, from the Philippines and South Korea to be resident at the Presbytery, Our Lady of the Wayside, Grasmere. Welcome also to Sister Maria Juan Anderson RSM who recently arrived at St Augustine's Preston to join the community of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma there.

A Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral on Tuesday 22 September in thanksgiving for the work and ministry of the Ursulines in Lancaster before they left the Diocese. Also On Thursday 15 October a Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated at St Wilfrid's, Preston to give thanks for 162 years of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in Preston as the Preston community closed.

PETER'S PENCE: The diocese has received a word of thanks from the Vatican Secretary of State's office for our offering of £12,161.51 as a contribution for the support of the Holy Father which will assist him in the exercise of his universal ministry. HOLY PLACES: also thanks has been received for the £16,910.20 collected for the Holy Land which will support the Church there.

New Diocesan Trustees: Mrs Karen Gunter - with special portfolio for Safeguarding Office matters; Canon Harry Doyle - with special portfolio for inner Preston Parish Properties. Safeguarding Commission: Mr Charles Proctor member and Chair; Father Christopher Cousens; Mgr David Hogan as Canonical Advisor to the Commission; Ms Jayne Clark as a member. Youth Service Management Group: Mrs Joanne Nicholson Board of Education & Formation: Mrs Eileen Silvester; Mrs Margaret Sellick.

DIOCESAN SHRINE OF THE DIVINE MERCY

For the duration of the *Year of Mercy*, Our Lady and St Joseph's church, Carlisle is to be a Diocesan Shrine to the Divine Mercy. There shall be an opening celebration for the Shrine (in the context of Vespers & Benediction) at 3.30pm on Friday 11 December 2015 – all are most welcome

All are encouraged to make pilgrimages to this Shrine during the Jubilee Year so as to experience the Gift of Divine Mercy.

St Faustina in her visions of the merciful Jesus experienced the mercy of God in a profound way. The Holy Father has asked that each Diocese

establish churches to be a focus for a profound experience of God's mercy. The hope is that Our Lady & St Joseph's, in being a shrine of the Divine Mercy as experienced by St Faustina, might become such a place – particularly for those in the north of the Diocese.

During the *Year of Mercy* the Canons of Ss Ambrose & Charles and their pastoral team aim to promote devotion to the merciful Jesus and to provide opportunities for people to come on pilgrimage to experience this Mercy. They plan to do this by increasing their already regular availability of the Sacrament of Confession. Also, the shrine will become a centre for adoration of the merciful Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

A special programme will be offered to pilgrims each Saturday throughout the Year consisting of Holy Mass, Lunch, a time for silence, a talk on the Divine Mercy, Eucharistic Adoration, Confession and Benediction. There will also be opportunities to venerate the relics of St Faustina and St John Paul II (who did so much to promote this devotion).

FROM THE PARISH WEBSITE

ANOTHER MESSY CHURCH As you can see from the accompanying photographs, this times Messy Church was well attended and much enjoyed.

Messy Church gives mums and dads and carers, and indeed anyone from the extended family the chance to come together and relax doing art and craft and other activities usually based on a biblical theme. We are very grateful to those who organise these days and those who take part.

DAY OF RENEWAL: St Clare's Parish Hall and Church were the venues for the latest in a long-running series of Days of Renewal.

Entering God's Rest was the theme chosen by the guest speaker Fr Martin Onouha presently working in the Shrewsbury Diocese in Chester. It was an apt theme for this time in the Liturgical Year. His contributions were much welcomed by the 50 or 60 who attended the Day.

ANOINT THEM WITH OIL: About twice a year the SVP Conference at St Clare's 'ship in' the sick, elderly and housebound of the parish for a Mass which includes the Sacrament of the Anointing of

the Sick. Afterwards there is a meal prepared and served by the SVP in the Parish Centre.

The parish clergy celebrated this Mass and anointed the sick in fulfilment of what is written in the Letter of St James: Are there any sick among you? Let them send for the priests of the Church; let the priests pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord and the prayer of faith will save the sick person. This outreach to our sick and senior parishioners is a sign of the Lord's concern for them.

HARVEST TIME AGAIN: in any Harvest Service, rural or urban, the main theme is always thanksgiving. And that was the tenor of the Service that the boys and girls from our school led us in this afternoon.

It is true there were no mammoth marrows of prodigious pumpkins but there were lots of the family favourites provided by parents which would later be distributed by the school to the sick, elderly & housebound of the parish.

There was an abundance of thanksgiving, praise of God for what he gives us and for what he encourages us to share. Songs, scripture readings, prayers coupled with thoughtful visual images acted out by the girls & boys all helped us to see that everything is gift; and that the gift of creation has to be well stewarded.

BINGO & KRACOW: Our World Youth Day fundraising got off to a flying start at St Clare's with a Prize Bingo to help take many of our young people to meet with Pope Francis in Krakow.

Krakow is the venue for this time's World Youth Day; this is an enormous gathering of Catholic youth from all around the globe who will gather together to celebrate their love of Jesus as young Catholics. It will be an opportunity for young people to actually experience the universality of the Church, rubbing shoulders with young Catholics from far and wide.

We have a mammoth task ahead of us as a parish to help each young person raise enough money (£600) to get them to WYD (and back)!

READY TO SAY SORRY: It is that time of year when we enter into the preparation of our boys and girls to celebrate the Sacrament of Forgiveness, a prerequisite to making their First Holy Communion.

Today (Sunday) at the 9.30am Mass, the boys and girls enrolled in the programme for which their parents had previously registered them.

The programme has four constituent parts: Holy Mass, Children's Liturgy, 6 sessions of catechesis and prayer at home. At the Mass the congregation promised to pray for the children at this special time.

A NEW HEADTEACHER: The Governors of St Clare's School on Wednesday last, appointed a new Head Teacher to take over from Mr Purcell who is leaving at the end of the Autumn Term to take up a post as an Advisor for the Local Authority (Lancashire County Council).

Mrs Anne Charnley is presently Head Teacher at St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School, Newhouse (Barton, just north of Preston).

Mrs Charnley writes: I have twenty-two happy years working in Catholic Education, from inner-city Liverpool to rural Lancashire. I am passionate about learning and teaching, loving the spontaneity, creativity and inquisitiveness of young learners. I strive to promote engaging and inspirational learning opportunities that encourage independent skills and foster a love of learning.

Mrs Charnley will take up post in January. We wish her well.

AND IN CONCLUSION: This has been a busy summer for the young people at St. Clare's. They have taken part in two 'projects.' Three of our young people went to Lourdes on the Diocesan Pilgrimage and ten young people went to the Hodovo Project coupled with the Medjugorje Youth Festival. On Friday evening they reported back to the parish.

The young people who went to Lourdes were the first up and they gave an account of their time at the French Shrine and how they cared for the 'VIPs' - the sick and elderly. They also spoke of how this visit enhanced their faith and the great memories that they will keep of it.

It was a similar story with the boys and girls who went to Bosnia & Herzegovina to work on the project to build a peace garden in the settlement at Hodovo which we have been supporting for some time. They built not just a peace garden but also lasting friendships with the young people who live there some of whom visited Preston in July. Besides the work in the settlement they spent time at the international Youth Festival together with about 50,000 other young people.

Both groups spoke of the blessing that these visits were and how their faith had grown. Thanks was paid first of all to the many parishioners who had financially supported these events, then to the adults who had

accompanied the young people and guided and kept them safe. Fr Loughran marked out Fr Darren for special thanks for the tireless efforts he had put in to making these ventures happen.

The evening ended with thanks to our Blessed Lady for her constant motherly care of our young people; three Hail Marys were prayed in French, Croatian and English!

A DUCK RACE: In support of the New Porch Fund A small group of parishioners, young and old, turned out on the morning of Saturday 26th September for the long awaited Duck race. The race took place at Brock Valley Picnic Site (sometimes known as Brock Bottoms or Brock Mill.)

The 285 plastic ducks were ceremoniously dropped in to the river from the road bridge. Some ducks were not sure which way to go and headed of slowly upstream, following a backwater! Those that knew which way to go, headed of slowly downstream choosing their own routes as they went.

The many obstacles in the river; rocks, branches and foam, proved too much for most of the ducks, in spite of the fairly fast flowing river and only three made it in reasonable time to the finish. No 252 was declared the winner with a prize of £50 for its sponsor and No 42 a close second won £10 for its sponsor.

The operation then moved into 'recovery mode' to rescue the ducks that didn't make it to the finish! Thanks to all who supported and helped at the event, which raised over £500 for the fund.

QUARANT ORE FOR VOCATIONS: St. Clare's was one of the two parishes in the Diocese that hosted the Quarant Ore for the launch of the Year of Priestly Vocations in our Diocese.

The Quarant Ore started on Friday evening with a Holy Hour and continued right through until the Holy Hour at 3pm on Sunday afternoon which brought an end to this period of prayer for priestly vocations. A good number of people volunteered from our parish and from parishes around the Deanery to spend some time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Many other people over the forty hours visited St. Clare's to pray for vocations to the priesthood. For the closing holy hour this afternoon over seventy people came together to pray for priestly vocations.

BAPTISM MASS: Today at the 09:30 Mass all those children who had been baptised here at St. Clare's over the last year gathered together to celebrate with the rest of the parish. 19 Children had been baptised over the last year many of who were able to join us for the celebration. After Mass the celebration continued in the parish hall with bacon butties and tea and coffee which always goes down well. Please keep all of these families in your prayers and they continue bringing their children up in the Catholic faith.

FROM CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

The start of the autumn term this year marked the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of St. Thomas More High School on 1 September 1965. St Thomas More was the predecessor school for Corpus Christi Catholic High School, which itself opened in 1988 following the merger of St Thomas More with St John Southworth. Since 1965 over 8000 children have been educated on the St Vincent's Road site and many former pupils along with former members of staff joined together with current pupils and staff for a special Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop Michael in July.

Many former pupils, including the daughters of Mr Bernard Loffler, the first Headteacher of St Thomas More, enjoyed a tour of the school after the Jubilee Mass and were delighted to see the many improvements that have been made to the building and its facilities in recent years. These improvements include the impressive new reception, blessed by Bishop Michael in July and the landscaped areas leading up to the new entrance.

As well as improved facilities, Ofsted reports published over the last two years have repeatedly recognised the extent of the changes that have taken place at Corpus Christi. The drive to improve is evident to all who visit and the school was involved in providing support to several other schools during the summer term.

Improved performance in relation to the Ofsted framework is very important, but it is a part of, and not the whole of what Corpus Christi seeks to provide for its pupils. At the heart of all that is being done to improve Corpus Christi is its life and mission as a Catholic community. There is a strong emphasis placed on Catholic Christian values and

Jesus' teaching influences all aspects of life across the school. The day begins and ends with prayer and everyone pauses before lunch to say the traditional prayer of grace before meals. Groups of pupils help the school's new Chaplain, John Griffin, to prepare resources to support morning and afternoon prayer each day.

As well as the development of the school's prayer life, developing a distinctively Catholic environment is also a priority in the Governors' Action Plan and in the summer term a range of quotations from scriptures were displayed around the school to form a quotation trail.

The appointment of a new Chaplain in the summer term has brought fresh enthusiasm and new ideas to this role and John has already introduced a number of initiatives that are providing pupils with greater opportunities to deepen their faith. In October and November pupils were able to be involved in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Jack McLaughlin Centre and on 21 November a group of pupils took part in the 'Embrace2' youth conference at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool. A group of pupils will be taking part in World Youth Day in Krakow and the school is already planning a range of events to mark the Holy Jubilee Year of Mercy, which begins on 8 December.

As well as liturgy and prayer, Corpus Christi also works hard to emphasise the importance of living out our faith both in school and in the way that we support those who need our help beyond our school community. In Lent pupils raised over £2000 for CAFOD and this term pupils have been involved in the Christmas shoebox appeal and collecting items to support refugees.

At the start of Advent the Corpus Christi family of schools, including St Clare's Catholic Primary School, will join together for their annual Advent Service on Tuesday 1 December at St. Gregory's Catholic Church. Towards the end of term the school will gather together for their end of term Advent Mass celebrated by Fr Darren. As well as this, Mass is celebrated every Thursday at 3.10pm in the school's Chapel and parishioners from all of the school's feeder parishes are warmly invited to join the school community for this Mass.

HODOVO UPDATE

For those who come new to this Magazine, Hodovo is a former refugee settlement in Bosnia Herzegovina which the parish has been supporting together with our primary school for about eight years. We mentioned in the last magazine the exchange visit here by some of the young people from Bosnia. At the beginning of August some of our young people went to the settlement and worked on a project there. At that time funds were handed over so that the roof on the village school could be repaired. Another request was made; previously, the setting up of a bakery (cooperative) had been supported which gave work to some of the people from the settlement. The bakery had a problem namely that the electricity would suddenly fail. This could be half way through the baking of a batch of bread or pastries which would then be lost. The request was for help to purchase a generator which would activate if the general power supply failed. A generator has now been provided. So in recent months, excluding the exchange visit, we have sent £1000.00 for winter fuel, £750.00 for the school roof and £3220.00 for the generator.

FROM A YOUNG FRENCH CATHOLIC

“I asked the Lord, with the help of all my faith, to come to my aid, to come and help us forgive you.”

I’m 18 and I’m Catholic. Today, like every Monday, as I left class, I went to have a cup of coffee on the patio of a café. Nothing amazing really. The coffee didn’t taste different from last week, the waitress’s smile was no different and the regulars were sitting at the same tables. Like every Monday I took yesterday’s newspaper out of my bag almost mechanically and skimmed the headlines.

But I don’t recognize the newspaper that I flip through every week. The logo is at half mast, and there is only one headline: “Sorrow and Anger.”

What Should I Do?

A picture of a man crying in front of a bouquet of flowers, candles and a French flag made the headlines. A man, tears, sorrow, anger, death, innocent people, injuries; I don’t want to read anymore. I put down my

paper, swallow my coffee and pay. For the first time this year I left this place where I am in the habit of reading my newspaper in peace early. So what should I do? Go home like the authorities advise us to do? No. I decided to walk to a place that is familiar and precious to my heart. After a five-minute walk, here I am.

This place is my parish church, my second home, the Lord's. I go in. There are a lot of people. I sneak in silence to the altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. No room there. The only remaining spot is a kneeler in front of the altar of St. Rita, the saint of lost causes and impossible things.

A passage from the Gospel according to Matthew comes to mind: "But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who spitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).

I Did Not Pray for the Victims ...

So I had an idea. I did not pray for the victims or for the bereaved or for the salvation of my beautiful homeland. Today I have prayed for you. I prayed to St. Rita that she help us to forgive. I asked her to help the French forgive you. I prayed for the families of the victims so that one day they can forgive you, forgive your unjustifiable and barbaric action. I asked the Lord, with the help of all my faith, to come help me, to come help us forgive. I asked St. Rita to bless you and to bring down the Grace of the Holy Spirit upon you.

I prayed to the Blessed Virgin Mary to watch over you. I asked her to wrap you in her love. To make you understand that we are on earth to love and not to kill. To make you understand the gravity and stupidity of what you did. I prayed for you to understand that no man, no matter who he is, where he comes from, what he believes or what ideas move him deserves to die just because he wanted to have a good time with his friends.

"If two of you agree to ask anything ..."

Then I remembered a second passage of the Gospel according to Matthew: "If two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matt. 18:20).

And I prayed not to be the only Catholic to pray for your forgiveness. I prayed for you to learn to accept the forgiveness of others, something that your ideology did not teach you. You who, like me, live in France, have a family, may the Lord Jesus Christ put you on the right path. May He teach you the meaning of love and brotherhood that binds us all.

Because you did not blow French society apart, you have strengthened it. You did not increase racism, you will eradicate it. You did not kill our faith, you have resurrected it.

Finally, I would like to quote a few words from Mother Teresa:

Life is beauty, admire it, Life is bliss, taste it, Life is a dream, realize it, Life is a challenge, meet it, Life is a duty, complete it, Life is a game, play it, Life is precious, care for it, Life is wealth, keep it, Life is love, enjoy it, Life is mystery, know it, Life is a promise, fulfill it, Life is sorrow, overcome it, Life is a song, sing it, Life is a struggle, accept it, Life is tragedy, confront it, Life is an adventure, dare it, Life is happiness, deserve it, Life is life, defend it.

I hope, dear terrorist, that these words will reach you so that you come to realize that hatred and death are not the solution.

A young Catholic who is trying to forgive.

A LITTLE LIGHT RELIEF

Letter in a Magazine

Sir.

I haven't got a computer; but I was told about Facebook and Twitter and am trying to make friends outside Facebook and Twitter while applying the same principles.

Every day, I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel, what I have done the night before and what I will do for the rest of the day.

I give them pictures of my wife, my daughter, my dog and me gardening and on holiday, spending time by the pool.

I also listen to their conversations, tell them that I 'like' them and give them my opinion on every subject that interests me....whether it interests them or not. And it works, I already have four people following me; two police officers, a social worker and a psychiatrist.

APHORISM: A short, pointed sentence that expresses a wise or clever observation or a general truth.

1. The nicest thing about the future is that it always starts tomorrow.
2. Money will buy a fine dog but only kindness will make him wag his tail.
3. If you don't have a sense of humour you probably don't have any sense at all.
4. Seat belts are not as confining as wheelchairs.
5. A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you're in deep water.
6. How come it takes so little time for a child who is afraid of the dark to become a teenager who wants to stay out all night?
- 7 Business conventions are important because they demonstrate how many people a company can operate without.
8. Why is it that at class reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?
9. Stroke a cat and you will have a permanent job.
10. No one has more driving ambition than the teenage boy who wants to buy a car.
11. There are no new sins; the old ones just get more publicity.
- 12 There are worse things than getting a call for a wrong number at 4 am - for example, it could be the right number.
13. No one ever says "It's only a game" when their team is winning.
14. I've reached the age where 'happy hour' is a nap.
15. Be careful about reading the fine print - there's no way you're going to like it.
16. The trouble with bucket seats is that not everybody has the same size bucket.
17. Do you realize that, in about 40 years, we'll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos?
18. Money can't buy happiness but somehow it's more comfortable to cry in a Rolls than in a Ford.
19. After 60, if you don't wake up aching in every joint, you're probably dead.
20. Always be yourself because the people that matter don't mind and the ones that mind don't matter.
21. Life isn't tied with a bow but it's still a gift.

FROM THE ORDO

The season of Advent is relatively free of feast days so as to concentrate on the holy season itself. However, some saints are observed during this time: St Lucy and St John of the Cross to mention but a couple. But the Christmas feast ushers in a whole plethora of feast days. The octave of Christmas is a bit of a hybrid; saints are celebrated but the Evening Prayer of the Church is usually of the Christmas Octave. St Stephen, St John, the Holy Innocents and St Thomas Becket are all remembered in the Christmas week.

At the gate of a New Year stand the figure of Mary, the Mother of God. Also in that week there is the newly restored commemoration of the Holy Name of Jesus which leads up to the Solemnity of the Epiphany. The usual feasts of January are placed before us commencing with the Baptism of Our Lord: St Antony, St Agnes, St Francis de Sales, The Conversion of St Paul, SS Timothy & Titus, St Thomas Aquinas and ending with the feast of St. John Bosco.

