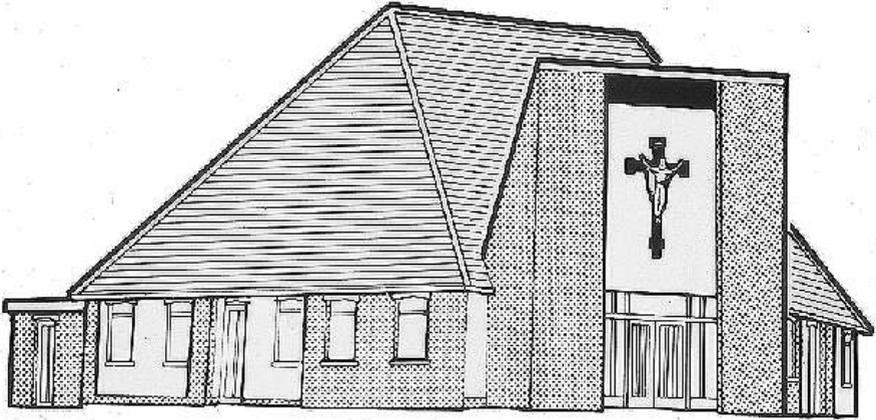


St. Clare's, Fulwood.

PARISH MAGAZINE



SUMMER 2014

THOSE LAZY, HAZY, CRAZY DAYS OF SUMMER

This Magazine is usually a 'retrospective giving a flavour of what has been happening in the parish and beyond since the last edition was published.

The later spring months and the early summer ones are particularly busy in most parishes. Lent finds its conclusion in the great Holy Week and Easter celebrations; and just a little later the First Holy Communion and Confirmation programmes come to an end and are celebrated in the usual fashion. This year the Confirmation Mass was not just a one-off call-in by the Bishop but rather formed part of a three day canonical visitation of the parish. Every few years – usually about five – the diocesan bishop is required to make a formal visitation of each parish in his diocese. It was not quite five years since he was here to do this last, but over the last few months he has been doing a systematic visitation of the Preston Deanery. We certainly kept the Bishop busy in his time with us which began on Saturday afternoon. About 50 of our young people had enjoyed a day together and the Bishop witnessed the culmination when the boys and girls for Confirmation met him and explained what their preparation had consisted of. Next he met with the *Seekers & GFF* Youth Groups who again explained what they had been up to over the recent months. Lastly, the girls and boys who are soon to go out to Bosnia to work on the Hodovo Project met with him and outlined their plans. Saturday evening Mass was attended by the Bishop and he spoke some words of encouragement to the congregation. After Mass he had a light supper with some of the Religious Sisters in the Parish. Bright and early on Sunday morning he arrived for the celebration of the 9.30am Mass, at which he spoke to the congregation. He was then led on a visitation of some of the sick and housebound. The Carmelite fathers and the dean were invited to lunch with us. Much of the afternoon was spent in the Parish Hall where group after group presented to the Bishop the way in which their particular group were trying to take forward the Kingdom of God. In the evening there was the Mass of Confirmation after which he presented certificates to those who'd been Confirmed. Monday saw the Bishop in our parish Primary School where he toured the classes and was present at an assembly;

then on to Corpus Christi High School where he was warmly greeted and welcomed and saw what excellent work was being done there.

Most of the events that we have participated in over the last period have appeared as items on our website. Around about Easter a new website was launched, our old one was looking tired and was prone to hacking. So our Webmaster, Jonathan Day, spent oodles of time building and launching this new edifice: www.saintclares.co.uk For those of you who do not have access to or time to access the World Wide Web there are snippets a little further along under 'From the Website.'

One departure from the norm has been the Catechesis (teaching sessions) run by members of the Neo-Catechumenal Way. The idea is to present the teachings of the faith in the way that the Apostles and early Church did. The team of catechists was mainly lay but with one priest in tow. There was no or little reference to dogma and doctrine but a heavy reliance upon the Gospel reaching into the very core of what it is to be Christian. They reminded us that in the early Church no one was admitted to baptism without going through a prolonged period of catechesis – 3 or 4 years were not unusual. Even then, the candidate had to persuade the Church Community that they had faith before they could be considered for baptism. This all changed when the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Empire. The flood gates opened and too many were seeking baptism for a proper catechesis to be given. It could be said that a certain dilution occurred. This catechesis is certainly not for the feint-hearted, it issues a strong challenge to change. And following the Catechesis, a small 'community' was formed. It will meet (usually) twice a week: on Wednesday of the Liturgy of the Word and on Saturday evening for a celebration of the Eucharist. From the NeoCatechumenal Way two 'families in mission' have arrived in our parish to take part on the general life of the parish and to be especially involved in the new Community.

HOLIDAY – AND NO MASS!

After the holiday season it is not unusual for priests in the confessional to hear from penitents that they were unable to attend Mass during their holidays. Many times these claims are made by those who go on

holiday in Europe: France, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Malta and so on. These countries are awash with Catholic churches where Mass can be celebrated even daily sometimes. It is true that Mass will probably not be in English; but in places where Brits often go for holidays, many times local clergy will provide an 'English Mass.' But no matter what the language, the Mass is always the Mass, a source of grace and life. No matter what language it is celebrated in, it is the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, and attendance is an obligation placed upon us by God for our own good.

But truth be told, some penitents go a little further in saying that although there was a church not too far away, they didn't feel that they could *impose* upon the people they were with: friends, family. But family and true friends will understand the importance for the individual of attending Mass. Indeed, going to Sunday Mass whilst on holiday is a good witness to the faith. And witnessing to the faith these days is probably more important than ever.

So, when on holiday stick out your neck, insist on going to Mass and invite others to go with you – you may be surprised. Of course, our insistence on going to Mass has to be backed up by the good example of our life the rest of the time!

FROM THE FIRST APOLOGY IN DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANS BY SAINT JUSTIN, MARTYR

Justin Martyr: Christian apologist, born at Flavia Neapolis, about A.D. 100, converted to Christianity about A.D. 130, taught and defended the Christian religion in Asia Minor and at Rome, where he suffered martyrdom about the year 165. Two "Apologies" bearing his name and his "Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon" have come down to us.

The celebration of the Eucharist

No one may share the Eucharist with us unless he believes that what we teach is true, unless he is washed in the regenerating waters of baptism for the remission of his sins, and unless he lives in accordance with the principles given us by Christ.

We do not consume the Eucharistic bread and wine as if it were ordinary food and drink, for we have been taught that as Jesus Christ our Saviour became a man of flesh and blood by the power of the Word of God, so

also the food that our flesh and blood assimilates for its nourishment becomes the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus by the power of his own words contained in the prayer of thanksgiving.

The apostles, in their recollections, which are called gospels, handed down to us what Jesus commanded them to do. They tell us that he took bread, gave thanks and said: Do this in memory of me. This is my body. In the same way he took the cup, he gave thanks and said: This is my blood. The Lord gave this command to them alone. Ever since then we have constantly reminded one another of these things. The rich among us help the poor and we are always united. For all that we receive we praise the Creator of the universe through his Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday we have a common assembly of all our members, whether they live in the city or the outlying districts. The recollections of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as there is time. When the reader has finished, the president of the assembly speaks to us; he urges everyone to imitate the examples of virtue we have heard in the readings. Then we all stand up together and pray.

On the conclusion of our prayer, bread and wine and water are brought forward. The president offers prayers and gives thanks, and the people give assent by saying, "Amen." The Eucharist is distributed, everyone present communicates, and the deacons take it to those who are absent.

The wealthy, if they wish, may make a contribution, and they themselves decide the amount. The collection is placed in the custody of the president, who uses it to help the orphans and widows and all who for any reason are in distress, whether because they are sick, in prison, or away from home. In a word, he takes care of all who are in need.

We hold our common assembly on Sunday because it is the first day of the week, the day on which God put darkness and chaos to flight and created the world, and because on that same day our saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead. For he was crucified on Friday and on Sunday he appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught them the things that we have passed on for your consideration.

UP-GRADING (EXTENDING) THE CHURCH PORCH

The Diocesan Trustees (those who in Civil Law hold in trust the assets of the diocese) have given permission for us to begin fundraising for this project. When we have at least 75% of the total, we have to re-apply to them for permission to go out to tender with the work. Just to remind us why we have embarked upon this scheme:

1. The creation of a toilet for use by the disabled
2. The availability of a 'baby changing' facility.
3. The creation of enough space for parishioners to mill around and greet each other.
4. Allowing high enough doors for dignified access for coffins.
5. Ensuring enough space for display of notices, newspapers, periodicals, information, ad hoc items.
6. The creation of a friendly, warm, welcoming area.

Already a fundraising meeting has been held, and about 6 parishioners attended and came up with some splendid ideas. We decided to begin fundraising in earnest in autumn when we have completed the next stage of our Bosnia outreach project. Periodically, there will be more details in the bulletin about meeting, events etc. Our aim is to raise £150,000!

WHAT IS A PARISH?

That question was posed to me a few months ago, and although my response was technically correct, the question made me reflect on just what a parish is.

In England the term 'parish' immediately lends itself to confusion, for not only do the Anglican and Catholic Churches have parish systems laid out in their respective Codes of Canon Law but 'parish' is also a term in civil law denoting an area of local government. It is the smallest area of LG coming below County Councils, City & Borough Councils and Unitary Authorities.

The quest (you remember!) was referring to the parish in the Catholic sense. Now, if we put away Canon Law with its definitions, rights and responsibilities (as important as they are), many people these days consider 'their' parish not necessarily to be the geographical entity in which they live, but rather the church they attend, the worshipping community to which they belong. I have heard it described in terms of 'comfort.' 'This is where I feel comfortable, Father.' Comfortable not in

the sense of sitting back, slippers on, coffee in hand, no! But rather in the sense of being part of something, of belonging, of being spiritually fed and nourished, of being appropriately challenged and motivated.

Of course, there is – if not a danger – then a cause for concern for those who ‘shop around’ for the fastest Mass, the shortest homily with no strings attached, no commitment. The geographical territory of a parish is important in many canonical and pastoral ways but, increasingly, people are alighting upon the church community that suits their spiritual needs.

CONFESSION - AGAIN?

On a recent visit to Fatima – the Shrine of our Lady in Northern Portugal – I took the opportunity to go to Confession. The priest asked how often I went to Confession. My response was every two or three weeks. ‘Make it two,’ was his reply! We are told that our Lady in Medjugorje recommends five essentials for the Christian life: Go often to Mass; Have a place in your home for the Word of God (the Bible); Pray the rosary every day; Fast twice a week (Wed & Fri) and go to Confession at least once a month. The priest in Fatima would probably agree with these recommendations but with a brother priest he was even more stringent.

I never fail to be surprised when regularly people come to Reconciliation only to confess that they have no sins to bring! They have the feeling that they should go, but really they have nothing to say. Oh to be in that situation! I never have a shortage of topics to bring to my Confession. They will not be opening the cause for my canonisation as a saint in the near, or even distant future!

Those who confess to ‘sainthood’ in the confessional often, after a little ‘help’, realise that they have ‘overlooked’ some areas that really ought to be examined and confessed.

I guess that we live in an age and a culture where so many of our Christian norms seem quaint or irrelevant. Many of the things that the Christian Church would consider sin are not even blinked at in society in general. Indeed, things that seemed heinous even only a few years ago, are now celebrated almost as a virtue. And then there is what I will refer to as ‘low grade sin.’ Things like swearing, being ill-tempered, being gossipy are often accepted as no big deal. But all sin impedes our relationship with God and inhibits our ability to be the man or the woman

that we are called to be. So perhaps the priest in Fatima was on the right road in suggesting a fortnightly Confession. Below is a short examination of conscience that I picked up in Fatima, maybe you will find it useful. I did!

The Lord say, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul (Deut 6:6)

What place does God occupy in my life? Do I truly love God with all my heart, or do I live concerned only with material things, work, business, riches and temporal well-being?

Do I cultivate my faith and my Christian formation by participating in courses, reading the Bible etc?

Do I pray every day and do I seek to bring my family members to pray also? Do I faithfully participate at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation? Or do I miss Mass without a valid reason?

Do I respect other people’s property? Did I refuse, without good reason, to give or to lend?

Do I offer up to God. my work, study and sickness? In difficulties do I turn to God for help with faith and perseverance, or do I consult ‘mediums’ and the occult? Do I have vows to fulfil?

Do I collaborate in the apostolic activities of my parish, or am I uninvolved?

The Lord says, ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’ (Jn. 15:12)

Do I share with those who are worse off than I am, do I give to the poor? Or am I greedy and self-centred always wanting the best for me?

Do I spend some time with the sick, giving catechism, or going out to the needy? As far as it depends on me, do I defend the oppressed, help the unfortunate, foreigners and people of other races?

Am I honest at work, fair in the job and in business? Do I pay just wages and taxes? Do I take what is not mine? Do I harm others? Do I mislead others? Do I make rash judgements, criticise, swear, bear grudges or harbour hate against someone?

As a son or daughter: Am I obedient to my parents, do I respect them? Do I help them in their spiritual and material needs? Do I get along with my brothers and sisters?

As a father or a mother: am I diligent in the Christian education and formation of my children? Am I overly demanding and intolerant with their failings, causing unnecessary conflicts?

As a husband or wife: are we faithful to each other, and do we love each other with all our hearts? Do we accept children as gifts from God, or do we try and eliminate them through abortion? Have we every advised abortion or collaborated in one?

Jesus says, ‘Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.’ (Mt 5:48)

Do I try to live in the presence of God, doing my best to please him, or do I live as if God does not exist? Do I go to confession when I need to be reconciled to God? Do I receive Holy Communion frequently?

Am I faithful to the moral and Christian law regarding matrimony?

As I am a temple of the Holy Spirit, do I maintain my senses and body pure and chaste?

In driving motor vehicles, do I respect the highway code? Do I use all care necessary so that I do not endanger the lives of others, or my own?

Do I over drink and over eat? Do I take drugs that are harmful to my health, or do I contribute to others taking harmful substances?

Do I scandalise others by my manner of speaking, attitudes or way of dressing? Do I take pleasure in watching immoral films, TV programmes or other images? With my lack of decency, have I led others to sin?

NEWS FROM CENACOLO

The first thing to say is ‘thank you’ to all those parishioners who, week by week, who put food and other items in the Cenacolo box in the porch. As many will know, the young men at Cenacolo do not accept State benefits but live off the providence of God. What they are given is what they eat; and if they are not given anything, they do without. But this rarely, if ever, happens, so great is the providence of God. So thank you again to those who respond to the promptings of God.

The House at Dodding Green is always a hive of activity. ‘Work’ is one of the three pillars of Cenacolo. To begin a job and to bring it to completion is, for some of the lads, a new departure. Such is the nature of drug addiction that seeing things through to the end is not always possible. So the sense of achievement when something is completed can be great. So works abound: looking after the animals (pigs, fowl); working in the poly tunnels and the kitchen garden; the building projects; general maintenance and cleaning; and the all-important kitchen work.

In May each year, the Fraternity celebrates the anniversary of its opening when parents and friends are welcomed to the House. Often a priest from the Community will be present, but this year two of the Consecrated guys (those preparing for priesthood) came for the celebration. For Marco it was his first visit to Dodding Green, Massimo has been here last year. It is always good the lads in Dodding Green to have contact with those who are close to the ‘heart’ of the Community; it spurs them on in their ‘walk.’

The most important thing that anyone can do for these lads is to pray for them; that is the best sort of providence.

THROUGH THE REGISTERS

We send our congratulations to the families of the following who were baptised in the parish recently: Theodore Mason, Niamh Kelly, Charlotte Littlechild, Talia Littlechil & Mae Pham-Whittle. Good wishes, too, to the boys and girls who recently received Holy Communion for the First Time and to those Confirmed in June. We offer our condolences to the families of Baby Kowalewska, Anne Lovell, Jack Bennett, Stephen Ambler, Alice Barker, Roseanne Dorning, Baby Greenwood, Janusz Cichy, Luigina Dawson, Mary Burke, Elizabeth Sumner, Mary Sinnott, David Wilkinson, Kathleen McMorrow, Wilfred Barker, Lily Reynolds-Parker, Ella Smith & Irena Iverdino whose funerals have been recently conducted by the parish clergy.

FROM THE DIOCESE AND OTHER SOURCES

APPOINTMENTS: Fr Stephen Pearson: Administrator (Dean) of the Cathedral & St Thomas More; Fr Peter Clarke: Parish Priest, St Bernadette's, Blackpool; Fr Peter Burns: Parish Priest, The Sacred Heart, Thornton; Fr Kevin Lowry: Parish Priest, The Holy Family, Freckleton & Warton - together with the pastoral care of St Anne, Westby, as Priest in Charge. **NEW VOCATIONS TEAM** thanks to Father Andrew Allman who has been Vocations Director since June 2011. Father Andrew – and the former Vocations Promotion Team - now complete their service. Father Darren Carden is to be the new Vocations Director: effective 4 July 2014. Father John Millar will continue in his current role as Assistant Vocations Director. Sister Mary Prudence Allen R.S.M. will also join both priests as an Assistant Vocations Director (specifically as Seminarian Liaison Officer): effective 4 July 2014. Sister Mary Prudence has lots of experience working in seminary. **MOVE:** The Diocesan Chaplain to the Syro-Malabar communities, Father Mathew Jacob Choorapoikayil will be moving on as Assistant Priest at Christ the King, Blackpool to continue his essential ministry as the new Priest-in-Residence at St Maria Goretti, Preston: Effective 8 August 2014. **PROPOSED PARISH MERGING** of the Blackpool Parishes of Christ the King and St Kentigern's. **CHAPLAINCY TO CATHOLIC STUDENTS**

IN PRESTON: The Jesuit Community at St. Wilfrid's, Preston will be offering a Sunday Mass for all students studying in Preston at 4.30pm beginning

on 21 September. Information about this Mass will be made available during the UCLAN Freshers' week (15 -20 September); it is hoped that this Mass will also be of interest to students from other institutions too.

COURSES AT BOARBANK HALL: There are two upcoming courses taking place at Boarbank Hall in Cumbria: 'Thinking Scripture – The Gospel of Matthew', 13-20 September 2014 (open to any Catholic interested in deepening their faith), and 'Freedom and Hope' 6 – 9 October 2014 (a residential event for those who work, care and pray for prisoners). More information: www.boarbankhall.org.uk

FROM CORPUS CHRISTI HIGH SCHOOL

As the school year ends, Corpus Christi Catholic High School continues to go from strength to strength. The changes that have taken place over the past year can only be described as transformational.

Staff, pupils and parents have responded positively to the challenge of bringing about dramatic improvements and the Section 8 inspections carried out by Ofsted this year show that changes have had a significant impact.

Our school is a vibrant community with dedicated staff who work closely with parents to ensure that all our pupils thrive and achieve great success. Ofsted have recognised that our new headteacher's leadership has had a very positive impact on staff and students and have stated that his 'clarity of vision, high expectations and drive to improve the school are tangible'.

The most recent section 8 report confirms that the conduct of pupils has improved markedly and recognises the impact of the school's work on attendance, which has also improved significantly. The report also confirms that the proportion of teaching judged to be good or better has more than doubled since the summer term.

Our shared Catholic faith is a central part of the life of our school community and during the summer term, pupils have been helping to prepare for our whole school end of year Mass of Thanksgiving. Every

class has taken part in a liturgy in our Chapel, where they have had time for prayer and reflection. This year the theme of Mass is “I will give you living water” (John 4:14) and pupils have each completed a piece of artwork that will form part of a huge display in the Sports Hall where our Mass will be celebrated.

Retreats to Castlerigg Manor in Cumbria have been held for every year group over this academic year which have given all pupils the chance to get to know their peers better, enjoy a time of prayer and reflection and to celebrate Mass in the Chapel of Castlerigg. Our Year 10 pupils were able to celebrate an outdoor Mass at Castle Head whilst on their retreat at Castlerigg.

Extra-curricular activities held throughout the year encourage all pupils to get involved. Our school production, ‘Little Shop of Horrors’ was held this term after months of rehearsals and was a huge success, with all members of the audience commenting about how impressed they were with the performance.

Governor, Tom McAuley said: “Little Shop of Horrors’ was a thoroughly entertaining and professional production. The costumes were authentic, the stage props were excellent and Audrey II (the plant) was out of this world! The production team and cast formed a very strong bond, which reflects very well on Corpus Christi as it continues to enhance its reputation as an all-round education provider.”

Sport is a valued part of our school and this term the PE department organised our annual Sports Day, which saw pupils of all abilities compete in an enjoyable event where the whole school took part in celebrating and supporting our competitors.

Headteacher David Hubbard says that he is extremely proud of both pupils and staff at Corpus Christi: ‘Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and reflect the huge importance that we attach to respecting the unique dignity and value of every person. Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and the courtesy that they show to our visitors is always very impressive’.

FROM THE PARISH WEBSITE

BETTER TOGETHER On Sunday (March 2nd) St Clare's Seekers Youth Group went to Our Lady & St Edward's (OLSE) parish to take part in a Youth Day supported by some of the members of the GFF Group (older boys and girls).

The reason for getting together was to encourage the young people from OLSE to make use of the youth group provided at St Clare's parish. In order to promote this youth day Ruth, Joe and I, along with Fr Horn went into OLSE primary school on Wednesday afternoon and delivered three 30 minute sessions to Key Stage Two classes. The result was that a total of 33 young people attended the day, which was very successful.

It was based around Psalm 105 "*The hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice*" which is the biblical text upon which the Seekers Youth Group is based. On the day, the young people took part in a number of activities to help them understand about Seeking Jesus first. Around half the young people were from OLSE parish; they have been invited to come along to the Seekers Group this Tuesday. The idea is that both St Clare's parish and OLSE will share the resource to benefit our young people.

PRAYER, FASTING & ALMSGIVING: Prayer, Fasting and Alms Giving, the three 'foundations' of the season of Lent, were achieved in one fell swoop on Friday lunch time (with the help of some of the girls & boys from St. Clare's school).

That is when parishioners and children gathered together for the Noon Mass and then onto the Parish Hall where a Lenten soup lunch was served. The money donated will form part of our support for the settlement and school in Hodovo in Bosnia and Herzegovina

RITE OF ELECTION: Rite of Election does not really sound like a 'Churchy thing' - but it is! It is that Service, held each year at the beginning of Lent, when those who are going to be received in the Church at Easter are greeted by the bishop in the Cathedral.

RCIA

This year our 'Journey in Faith' group has been quite numerous but only one person from that group will be received into the Church at St. Clare's: Paul Butterworth. The others will be received into the Church

in other parishes at other times. One Saturday Paul and his wife, Angela supported by a few members of the group went to Lancaster where the Rite of Election took place. There were many there from many parishes across the diocese. The bishop greeted them all and prayer was offered for them. It is up to us all now to remember these people in our prayers over the Lenten period.

DEANERY FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT On Saturday St. Clare's church teams was competing in the under 14's Deanery football tournament at Corpus Christi Catholic High School.

For most of the players in the teams this was the first time playing football together. Before the tournament we only practised once which was the Saturday before. St Clare's had three teams A, B and C in the A team was a player from St Andrew and Blessed George Haydock, so the A team was a joint effort between the two parishes. The other parishes that took part were Our Lady & St Edwards, St Maria Goretti both of whom had one team each. The tournament was started last year and we hope to run another one in June this year. Some of the parishes have asked if there can be a under eight's tournament, we are looking at this for the tournament in June. The tournament results are as follows:

Winner of the Tournament St Maria Goretti

2nd St. Clare's A & St Andrew and Blessed George Haydock

3rd Our Lady & St. Edwards

4th St. Clare's B

5th St. Clare's C

Although St. Clare's did not win the tournament two of our players won trophies for player of the tournament and goal keeper of the tournament. Michael Law won Keeper of the tournament and Tom Luton won player of the tournament.

Corpus Christi Logo Many thanks to Steve & Cath Greenwood and John Slater (St. Clare's) for organising the tournament. Also thanks to the tournament officials Azam and Steve who are pupils at Corpus Christi Catholic High School. We are very grateful to Corpus Christi Catholic High School for allowing the Deanery to use their football facilities. Our thanks also go to the Catenian Association Preston circle 14 for sponsoring the tournament with the cup and trophies. The cup that they supplied will be used for future tournaments

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY REFLECTION DAY Today 16 of the 23 Catholic Chaplaincy volunteers gathered together for their annual Lent day of reflection at the Ladyewell Shrine.

The day started off at 10am with coffee and a bit of time to catch up with each other. We then gathered together for Morning Prayer from the Divine Office, after Morning Prayer Sue Lawrenson facilitated the next part of the morning which was exploring a number of questions with regard to 'end of life' and our ministry in the hospital. After these discussions we joined the 12 noon Shrine Mass, which I con-celebrated with Fr Hoole the director of the Shrine.

Fr Tom during his few words after the Gospel said that just as Christ had great concern for the sick, we too, are called to care for the sick. He went on to say that this was very evident in the work that the Catholic Chaplaincy Team carry out at the Royal Preston Hospital in the name of Christ and his Church.

After Mass we gathered together for lunch which was prepared by Sr. Anne and served by Sr. Patricia and some of the Ladyewell volunteers. After lunch we gathered again to talk about our ministry and chaplaincy in general before finishing for the day at 2pm. Many thanks to Fr. Tom, Sr. Patricia and the team at Ladyewell for hosting our day of reflection. Thanks also to Sue Lawrenson for her input and Sr. Anne for catering for us.

SEEKERS END OF TERM TRIP Yesterday evening 33 children from our Seekers Youth Group went to Rascals Play Centre accompanied by myself, Ruth & Joe and the volunteers from the youth group.

The children had an amazing time. When they first arrived they explored all the different slides and climbing frames and anything else they could find. After a short while the tea was served and we all sat and ate together, after this they were straight back to having fun. Some children tried to convince me to go down the slide to which I responded with some excuse. The next thing I knew was that there were 33 children shouting for me to go down the slide, in the end I did not have much choice as they would not stop until I went down the slide. So I went down the slide with all 33 of them following close behind. Joe,

Emma, Eileen and Anne also took the slide and climbing frames. A good time was had by all and we look forward to seeing the group next term when we re-start on Tuesday 6th May. Many thanks to Eileen, Emma and Anne for all their support over the last term.

GOD'S FRIENDS FOREVER THEATRE TRIP On Saturday evening the GFF youth group departed from St Clare's for their end of term group trip.

We first went to Pizza Hut at Deepdale where we enjoyed spending time together eating and chatting. After we had finished at Pizza Hut, we then made our way to St Walburge's Parish Hall which was the venue for the play 'Soldier To Saint', written by RISE Theatre's Charley Pinfold. The play is a modern take on the story of Britain's first Christian martyr, St Alban.

The Metanoia Project invited RISE Theatre to Preston who have been travelling around the country with the play 'Soldier to Saint', this was RISE Theatre's final night of the tour, about 120 people came to St. Walburge's.

The story is set in 2020 London. It is a terrifying time of upheaval, when Christians are being persecuted and forced into hiding. The play opens with a figure wearing a coat and clutching a briefcase, frightened not knowing where to seek refuge. He is reluctantly taken in by a soldier, John Alban, who is haunted by his experiences in war.

The two strike an unlikely friendship, as it is revealed that the man is a fugitive priest, Fr. Thomas Emmanuel. John is very impressed by the strength of the faith of Fr. Emmanuel, and starts to read his bible. During subsequent conversations, John is convinced in the truth of the story of Jesus, and is baptised by Fr. Emmanuel.

When the police come to check on who is living in his apartment, John first of all tries to pass Fr. Emmanuel off as a friend staying overnight in his apartment. When the police return, convinced that Fr. Emmanuel is being hidden in the apartment, John persuades Fr. Emmanuel to let him take his place.

During questioning by the judge, it is discovered that he isn't the real Fr. Emmanuel. Faced with the choice of renouncing his beliefs or certain death, John refuses to walk away from the truth and is executed.

We live in an increasing secular society which is becoming increasingly challenging for Christians. One wonders how we would react if our society reached the stages depicted in this play. Would we be prepared to make the same sacrifices as John Alban, would we be able to stand up for what we believe?

'BRING FLOWERS OF THE RAREST,' as the old Marian hymn says, is exactly what the boys and girls from our Parish Primary School did on Friday afternoon as we held our annual May devotions. The devotions in church should have been preceded by a procession from school to church. However, the weather was so wet in the morning that the procession was cancelled, and of course, the afternoon turned out to be bright and fair, if a little breezy!

We cannot vouch for the rarity of the flowers but they were certainly numerous; it is doubtful too, that they came from 'garden and woodland and hillside and dale,' more likely the local supermarkets, but come they did and all to honour Mary, the Mother of Jesus. We honour Mary for she is the one who brought Jesus to us and still, through her prayers, bring us to him.

For the rest of May, the processional statue will replace the one usually in church and the flowers will be maintained there for as long as they last.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS Because of the size of our church and because of the number of boys and girls receiving First Holy Communion, an extra Mass was celebrated for this special event. 26 girls and boys accompanied by family and friends and surrounded by a haze of love tramped their way into church at the beginning of Mass and introduced themselves to the congregation. They returned to their parents only to come to the front again at the time of the homily, sat with the priest and teased out the meaning of the 'Good Shepherd' who was spoken of in the Gospel of the Day.

Following the Mass there was a 'bun fight' in the Parish Hall with the distribution of Certificates. The lead catechist, Eileen Cywinski, together with her team were warmly thanked. And 26 little boys and

girls went home happy and full of grace having received our Lord for the first time in Holy Communion.

ALTAR SERVERS' PILGRIMAGE Yesterday was the Altar Servers annual pilgrimage to Ladyewell Shrine led by Bishop Michael. Eleven of our thirty three serves joined Fr. Darren for the event. The day started off with Bowling at MFA Bowl in Preston; the group were spilt into two teams for bowling. George Soko was the winner of team A and Erin Ross was the winner of team B. After bowling the groups enjoyed lunch together before making their way to Ladyewell Shrine. The Blessed Sacrament procession was from St Mary's, Fernyhalgh to Ladyewell Shrine. At first we did not know if the procession would go ahead due to the weather, but just before 1.30 there was a break in the weather and the decision was taken for the procession to go ahead. Prabhu Thanikachalan and Richard Van-Parys assisted in carrying the canopy which protected the Blessed Sacrament carried by Bishop Michael. Both lads struggled with the wind while trying to protect the Blessed Sacrament during the procession. Once the procession reached the Shrine there where a number of prayers said before we heard the Gospel from this weekend's Mass about the Good Shepherd. Fr. Darren preached the homily after the Gospel. He spoke about the part of the Gospel where Christ talked about knowing the shepherd's voice. Fr. Darren mentioned during the homily that the only way that we can truly know the voice of the shepherd is if we are in constant communication with Christ through prayer. He went on to say that also this weekend is the annual day for prayer for vocations and that many vocations come from those who in the past have served on the altar and that it was important for altar servers to be open to a calling from God to the priesthood and religious life. The weather held just until the end of the pilgrimage when the heavens opened and the rain came down. The group then spent some time at Ladyewell with the other servers from around the Diocese, the day ended with the servers talking with Bishop Michael before having their photograph taken with him. We give thanks for the work of our Altar Servers at St Clare's, we are blessed to have so many.

NEO CATECHUMENAL WAY The adult catechesis began here at St. Clare's last Monday and Thursday; around 35 attended each evening.

As a build up to the adult Catechesis, members of the Neo Catechumenal Way from Communities around the North West went around the houses in the parish on Saturday and Sunday of last week knocking on doors inviting people to come to the catechesis. Also, as a way supporting the on-going catechesis, members from other Communities where today (Sunday) in Preston City Centre giving witness to how God has helped them in their lives and the lives of their families. Five different people spoke. Questions were asked by those members of the public who had gathered around to listen. There was also singing as well as scripture being read; the group where in the City Centre from 1pm till 3pm; they will return for the next three weeks to the same place: The Flag Market (the square in front of the Harris Library). If you were present at some of these talks last year, I strongly urge you to come and listen again. Or maybe you did not manage to get to any of them last year and have been unable to attend last week, I strongly advise you to come and listen, each talk lasts 45 minutes every Monday and Thursday.

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE LEAVERS' MASS Last Friday Cardinal Newman College welcomed Bishop Campbell who was celebrating the leavers' Mass.

Fr. Darren the college chaplain said "Bishop Campbell was delighted to attend the college to celebrate with the young people who would be shortly leaving the College for pastures new".

The Bishop gave the homily after the Gospel in which he said "Shortly you will move on from here into a wider and different world, just like those first disciples of the Lord Jesus. They faced the unknown and often the uncertain and you will do so as well. Those disciples could hardly have imagined the challenges they would have to face in bringing the story of Christ to the world. The assistance of Christ's Holy Spirit enabled them to bear unflinching witness to all and sundry. We have just heard from the Acts of the Apostles an example of Saint Paul proclaiming the Christian message and catechising his own fellow-Jews. Their work and courage in handing on the truth of what they received from Jesus is the reason why we are here this morning"

After Mass Bishop Campbell shared lunch with some students and staff before being taken on a tour of the college by Nick Burnham the Principle of Cardinal Newman College.

SURFING THE WEB

Below is information about ‘Catholic Websites’ that was found on the Diocesan Websites. May be worth a visit.

The Vatican: vatican.va

You’ll find enough here to keep you busy for hours on end.

On the home page is a handy way to find all the recent writings, activity and news relating to Pope Francis. You can check out photos and follow his current and upcoming activities.

Do a bit more clicking and you can find just about any encyclical, papal writing or Church document you could want to read. The site’s been overhauled recently, and while it’s not perfect, it’s better than it was — and there’s no denying the usefulness and opportunity that’s here!

EWTN Global Catholic Network: ewtn.com

I once had a project where I had to dig through some of the content on the EWTN website. I thought it would be quickly done, but that’s because I vastly underestimated the amount of content that’s there.

Yes, there’s the media linkage you’d expect to the TV and radio programming and the tireless news work they conduct. But there also are subsites on faith that could take you the rest of the year to plumb, including devotions, a document library and a dozen mini-sites that are beautiful, educational and awesome.

They also have a sub-site dedicated to kids, with games, prayers and TV programs.

New Advent: newadvent.org

This isn’t an optional site for me. It’s a bit of everything: the Catholic Encyclopedia, St. Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologica in its complete text, writings of the Fathers of the Church, the Bible, a library of Church documents that still makes me swoon, and my favourite part, if I’m honest: content curation.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: sborromeo.org/ccs.htm

Have you ever wished you could look up a reference in the catechism or find all the places where a certain phrase was mentioned? Have you

ever struggled to remember where you read something or wondered what the catechism has to say about a topic?

Decent Films Guide: decentfilms.com

Greydanus

Though I like a good movie as much as the next gal, I'm not up on what's hot and what's not — or, more importantly, what's good and what's not. That's where film critic Steven Greydanus comes in. Not only is he Catholic, but he must watch movies all day long. And then he writes about them, rates them and lets you know what he thinks. It's a source I trust and a way to discover gems, too.

Word on Fire: wordonfire.org

Confession: I'm a Father Robert Barron fangirl. When I met him a few months ago, I barely restrained myself from just giving him a big fat hug. (No, really.) Part of what makes me such a fan of his is the amazing work he has done and continues to do through his Word on Fire apostolate. There are videos and podcasts and articles and more.

A LITTLE LIGHT RELIEF

I tried to catch some fog. I mist.

When chemists die, they barium.

- Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.
- A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
- I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.
- How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.
- I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.
- This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.
- I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I can't put it down.
- I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words .
- They told me I had type A blood, but it was a type-O.
- This dyslexic man walks into a bra .
- I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

- A cross-eyed teacher lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?
- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- What does a clock do when it's hungry? It goes back four seconds..
- I wondered why the ball was getting bigger. Then it hit me!
- Broken pencils are pointless.
- What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.
- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool .
- I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.
- I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.
- All the toilets in London police stations have been stolen.
Police say they have nothing to go on.
- I took the job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.
- Velcro - what a rip off!
- Cartoonist found dead in home. Details are sketchy.

FROM THE ORDO

A feast with a Preston connection is that of our Lady of Mount Carmel, there being two Carmelite foundations in Fulwood. Two newer feasts are also celebrated in July, they are respectively, the feasts of the Lancashire and Cumbrian Martyrs (19/7, 24/7). One of the many patron saints of Europe, St. Bridget comes up on the 23rd swiftly followed by the Apostle St. James on the 25th. Three other feasts of note bring the month to its conclusion: Ss. Joachim and Anne, parents of our Lady; St. Martha who welcomed Jesus into her home, and another Preston landmark feast, St. Ignatius Loyola founder of the Society of Jesus whose priests staff St. Wilfrid's. August is full of beautiful feasts. It starts with St Alphonus the founder of the Redemptorists. We move then to St John Vianney who is the patron saint of diocesan priests. St Mary Major was the first church in the west to be dedicated to our Lady and that anniversary is kept on the 5th with the feast locally (Rome) known as our Lady of Snows. The wonderful feast of our Lord's Transfiguration is on the 6th and is followed by the feast of the Lancaster Martyr's on the 7th. St Dominic, St Lawrence our own St

Clare and St Maximilian Kolbe, a martyr of Auschwitz come in quick succession and lead us to the great solemnity of our Lady's Assumption. The rest of the month is peppered with saints days: St Bernard, St Pius X, St Bartholomew, St Monica and her son, St Augustine. At the end of the month we celebrate the martyrdom of St John the Baptist and finally the saints of Lindisfarne. August is that month when we stagger from feast day to feast day remembering those great heroes and heroines of our faith. These saints are part of our family. They love us and they are 'on our side.' Just as we celebrate special occasions in the lives of those we love in our family, so it is right to celebrate saint's days. God wants to honour them and he will bless us through their intercession, so we should not be slow to ask them to pray for us especially on their feast days. September too, brings a plethora of celebrations: St. Gregory, St Cuthbert (Diocesan Patron), the Birthday of our Lady, St John Chrysostom, The Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Korean Martyrs, St Matthew Our Lady of Walsingham. The feast of St. Vincent de Paul, the great champion of the poor. And lastly, our focus turns to angels; first the Archangels: Gabriel, Raphael & Michael on Sept. And then to the Guardian Angels but that takes us into another month.

SAINT

CLARE

OF ASSISI



PLACE
YOUR MIND
BEFORE THE
MIRROR OF
ETERNITY.
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