

The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 341 + July '22

**Pg 8 Meet the New Mayor for Fylde Borough Council**



# Day for Life 2022

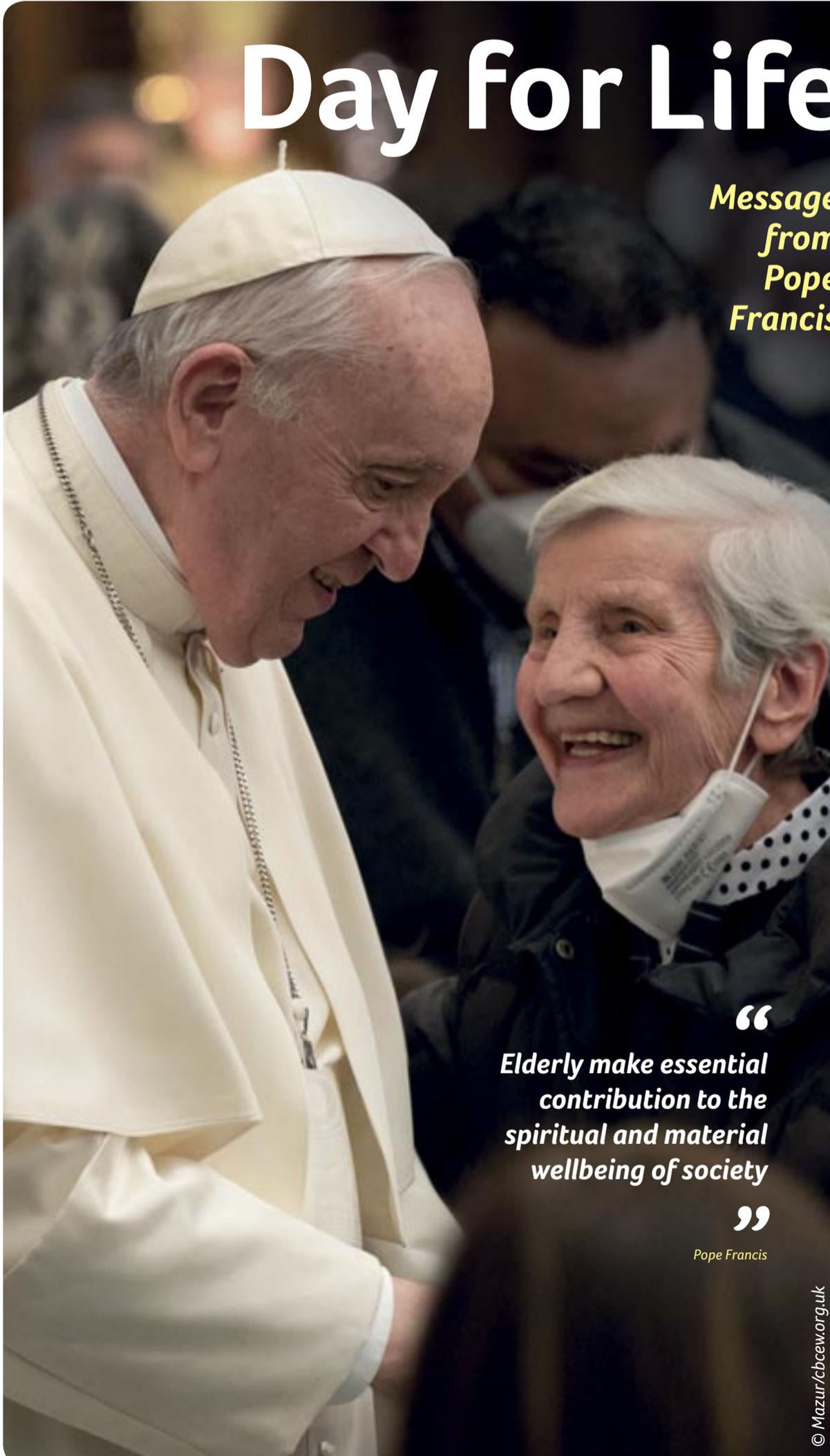
## Message from Pope Francis

In a message sent to Bishop John Sherrington and the Bishops' Conferences of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, Pope Francis offered his support and prayers for those who celebrated Day for Life on Sunday, 19 June 2022.

Taking the theme 'Caring for the Older Person', Day for Life offers the opportunity to uphold the dignity of human life in all its forms from conception to natural death.

The Holy Father prays that our "efforts in the defence of the God-given value and dignity of every human life, in all its stages, will be fruitful in drawing attention to the particular worth of our elderly brothers and sisters".

Read the Holy Father's full text on Page 13.



**“Elderly make essential contribution to the spiritual and material wellbeing of society”**

”  
Pope Francis

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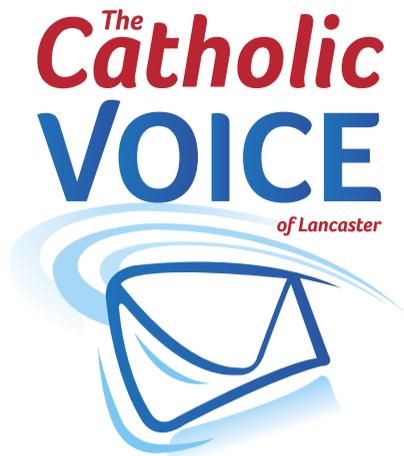
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# Ukrainian Seafarers

**Russia's invasion of Ukraine has not only destroyed towns and villages and forced millions of terrified people to flee for safety, it has also left many seafarers stranded and anxious about their families.**

The Russian naval blockade in the Black Sea has meant that Ukraine's ports, including its largest, Odessa, are closed.

With seafarers from Ukraine representing five percent of the global population of seafarers and Russian seafarers ten percent, Stella Maris chaplains in ports around the world have been providing additional support to all seafarers affected by the war and to their families.

To help Ukrainian seafarers stay in touch with their families, Stella Maris port chaplains are making phone cards and data SIMs available to Ukrainian seafarers free of charge.

Many seafarers are stuck in Ukraine unable to escape the fighting and running dangerously low on food and medical supplies. Families of seafarers are desperately trying to get to the border, and Ukrainian seafarers around the world are waiting anxiously for news of their loved ones, fearful of what happens when their contracts end.

In Odesa, Stella Maris Ukraine national director and port chaplain Fr Oleksandr Smerechynskyy and his assistant Rostik Inzhestoikov have decided to remain in the country to work with humanitarian agencies to ensure vital food supplies can be delivered to seafarers trapped on ships in the Black Sea. They are also running a soup kitchen to help families of seafarers in the city.

Rostik said, "It's impossible to say what it's like for these seafarers. I spoke to a ship master who could hear rocket attacks overhead. It's not easy for seafarers to leave the ships, so we use mobile phones. We ask: are you alive, are you ok? It's important to maintain communication in such hard times.

"Every day you wake up, and the most important thing is that you woke up. The next priority is to make sure your family woke

up too. Then you try and start to work."

Stella Maris Ukraine is also supporting families of seafarers, especially wives and children, to get to the borders. They are then being helped by the wider Stella Maris network across Europe.

In Poland, a Stella Maris centre is providing emergency accommodation for up to 50 people, mainly women and children. This 'home away from home' is a vital source of refuge and respite. Nearly every day brings another request for accommodation from a seafarer for themselves or their families. Stella Maris CEO and European Regional Coordinator Martin Foley said the war in Ukraine is once again highlighting the importance of shipping and seafarers to the world economy.

"We must not forget its impact on seafarers and their families. Stella Maris chaplains have met Ukrainian and Russian seafarers united in their heartbreak at what is happening, and across the world have been working hard to help them keep in contact with their families back home. Listening to the seafarers, their anxiety and weariness is palpable."

Stella Maris port chaplains have also been providing practical and emotional support to many Ukrainian seafarers who are worried about their long-term employment prospects once they finish their contracts.

Sea Sunday, which this year falls on 10th July, is when the Church places the spotlight on seafarers and those who provide support to them.

The Covid-19 pandemic and now the war in Ukraine, through whose ports its grain, sunflower oil and rapeseed oil are exported, have highlighted just how dependant we are on seafarers for so much we rely on in our daily lives. We might never meet a seafarer, but many of the items in our homes will have been handled by them.

*Greg Watts*

[www.stellamaris.org.uk/seasunday](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk/seasunday)



# Hope Conquers Fear

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)*

**M**ary's Meals are served in the world's poorest, and often most difficult, locations because we know that's where we're needed the most. For 20 years, we've been able to keep reaching hungry children because of the kindness of those who believe in our mission.

Today, we face some of our greatest challenges yet in a world devastated by war and food insecurity – as well as the cost of living crisis, which we know is affecting our dedicated supporters here in the UK. It is easy to feel hopeless when faced with so much suffering. But, even in desperate times, every single thing that people do for our mission makes an enormous difference to the children who eat our nutritious school meals, allowing them to gain an education and look to a much brighter future. For just 8p a serving, we are feeding hungry children in truly difficult circumstances, including in six countries affected by brutal conflict including Ethiopia and Yemen.

With Mary's Meals, hope can conquer fear, hunger and unfulfilled dreams. At this difficult time, more than ever, we need your help to keep our promise to the 2,279,941 children who eat our meals every school day – and, together, we'll reach the next hungry child waiting.

It costs just £15.90 to feed a child for a year with Mary's Meals. And, if you can't afford to donate at this time, there are many other ways to get involved. We would like to thank all of you who continue to support our work by giving generously of your time, goods, money, skills or prayer.

Every single thing people do for the mission makes an enormous difference to the children who eat Mary's Meals, allowing them to gain an education and look to a much brighter future.

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, founder of Mary's Meals, reflects:

*“The world is in a mess. There are so many humanitarian crises and so much uncertainty, it can feel difficult to make the right choices.*

*“When I saw so many good people driving trucks of aid to Ukraine, it reminded me of when we did that 30 years ago, during the last war in Europe, and how that so unexpectedly led to the birth of Mary's Meals.*

*“We read that food prices are rising rapidly and that the wars in Ethiopia, Yemen and Ukraine continue without end in sight meaning that for many children survival is more important than education.”*

*“Yet in the face of this disturbing turmoil and any temptation towards despair, Mary's Meals remains a beacon of hope, particularly for the children we serve in six of the countries that are mired in brutal conflict.*

*“The promise of a school meal is more important than ever to children living in the most difficult circumstances imaginable.”*

To find out more about volunteering or to arrange a talk or visit to your parish, school or group, please contact Fran Lawson (Supporter Engagement Officer) at [fran.lawson@marsymeals.org](mailto:fran.lawson@marsymeals.org)

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# Youth at Castlerigg Manor



## WHAT'S THE NEWS?

I've always said that when the sun is shining there's nowhere I'd rather be than in the Lake District. The sun hasn't always shone lately, but we've had a good share of nice days and we've made the most of them.

May has been very busy with retreats. We've had groups visiting us from Barrow, Burnley, Halifax, Leicester, Liverpool, Preston, Bolton, Lancaster and a few other places I've probably forgotten. We've also been out visiting young people on site in Preston, Whitehaven, Carlisle, and Workington.

For the first ten days after Easter we were delighted to host the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. All of the Brothers and Priests based in Europe descended on Castlerigg for their post Easter retreat

and conference and as ever they made quite an impression on us.

This weekend is our Open Confirmation retreat, LIT, and the weekend after is our prep weekend for the Youth Section of the Lourdes Pilgrimage.

## WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING?

### World Youth Day 2023, Lisbon

Bookings are now open for World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon. We have about 20 places and we're looking to take a group of young adults as part of a wider discipleship experience. We've managed to keep the price down to £995 for the whole thing. For more details, get in touch with us or check out our new website.

World Youth Day was started in the 1980s by Pope Saint John Paul II. He had a huge

heart for young people and wanted to give them their own event where they could come together, meet others from around the world and celebrate their faith together. Lancaster Diocese has been involved since the 1990s!

### Come to Youth 2000 with the Diocese

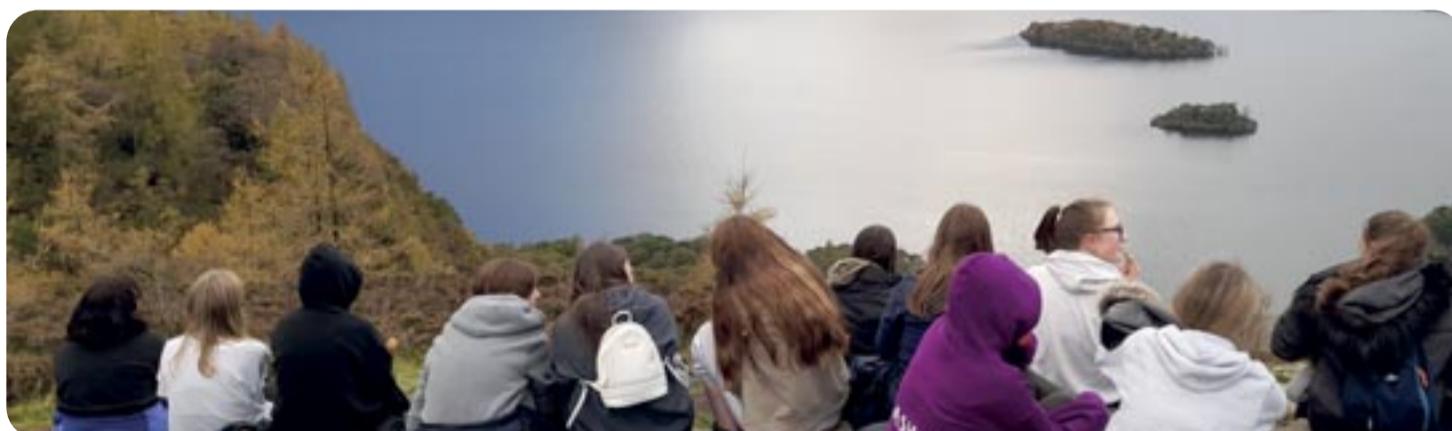
The Youth 2000 Festival will take place this August Bank holiday at Ampleforth Abbey in North Yorkshire. The diocese has a good relationship with Youth 2000 and we are organising a trip and even offering subsidised tickets. Head to our website for more information.

### Sign up for the Castlerigg Lottery

You know the score! £3 per month and the winner takes half the pot. Details on:

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# Five Quick Youth Group Ideas

**S**truggling for something to do with the youth group. Try some of these...

**Organise a sponsored event** // challenge the group to come up with and organise a fundraising idea. Split them into groups and give them ten minutes to make a pitch. Pick the best one, then set everyone to work on a different part of it.

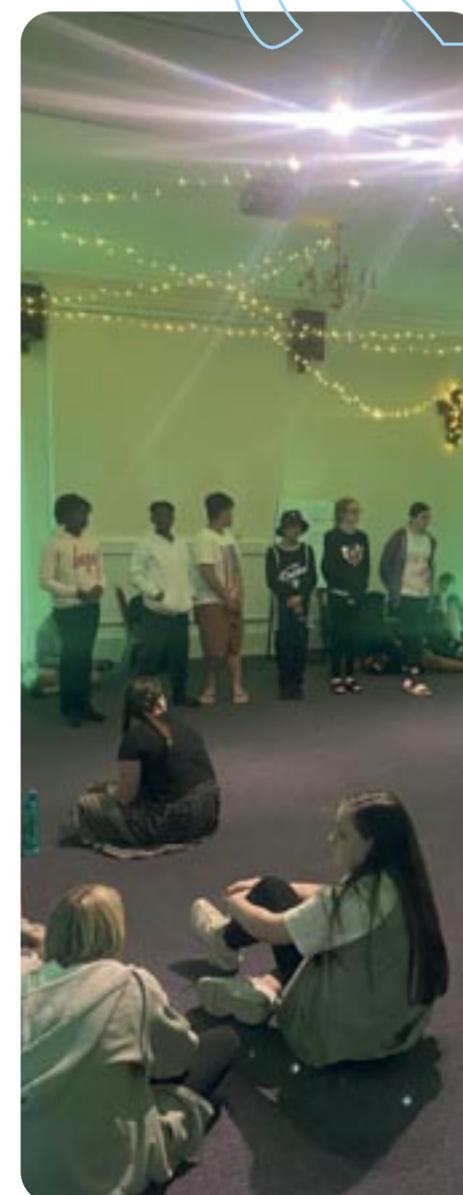
**Pray through the papers** // give the young people a stack of recent newspapers and magazines. Get them to cut out articles about things they want to pray for. Then, at the end, take everyone into Church (*chapel, prayer space etc*) and pass around a candle. When the candle comes to each person (*or each group etc*) they explain what they want to pray for and talk about the article/ picture they've chosen.

**Bible Olympics** // Put them into groups competing against each other and set some questions (*google it – there are loads on line*). First one to read out John 10:10 / First team to find the word

'heart' / First team to find a parable / First team to find a wise saying / first team to find a letter... that sort of thing!

**Two truths and a lie** // This is a Castlerigg favourite. Pick a person and get them to think of 3 facts about themselves – two true and one false. They lay out the facts and everyone gets to question them to find before voting on which one is false. This can be done in small groups each person taking turns, but bear in mind that it takes longer than you think. It can be fun to make this into a series by picking a person to take a turn at the start of each youth group meeting.

**Find an ice-breaker and teach it** // We all know how hard it can be to find new ice-breaker games. We also know that almost every young person in the youth group has a phone. So why not combine these two problems by challenging the young people to find a new ice-breaker game online and teach it to the rest of the group. There are a tonne on line, especially YouTube!



# A Baker's Dozen Questions

**G**et to know the Castlerigg team! This month, it's the turn of Beth. Beth is in her second year with us and is also part of CAFOD's Step into the Gap programme. Sadly she'll be leaving us this summer. Here she is with the inaugural edition of A Baker's Dozen Questions...

1. *What's your name?*

Bethany Bowe.

2. *Where are you from and what's it like?*

Whitehaven in Cumbria. It's quite a small town and there's not loads there, but it's a nice place to live.

3. *Tell us about the first time you ever saw Castlerigg?*

It was quite a few years ago. I just remember it being really exciting because it was such a big house!

4. *What made you want to join the team?*

Knowing other people who had been on team in the past and coming on retreats made me want to have the experience myself.

5. *What were you doing before?*

University doing my undergraduate degree in Education and World Religions.

6. *What are you planning on doing afterwards?*

The plan is to go on to do my Masters in Education and Social justice and to continue working in the Church.

7. *What's your favourite bit from the bible, and why?*

Probably when Jesus called his first disciples because he didn't call really important figures but people who you might call 'average' like fishermen!

8. *Do you have a favourite saint?*

St Bernadette – because I've always found her inspiring. Even though people didn't believe what she was saying, it didn't stop her passing on what Mary had told her to say, and

from doing great things.

9. *If you had a super power what would it be?*

I'd like to fly because I want to travel the world.

10. *If you ruled the world with absolute power what would be the first law that you passed?*

I honestly don't know.

11. *If you were asked to redecorate Castlerigg, where would you start?*

Put another stained-glass window in the chapel because the one we've got is really beautiful when the light shines through!

12. *What's your favourite place in Keswick?*

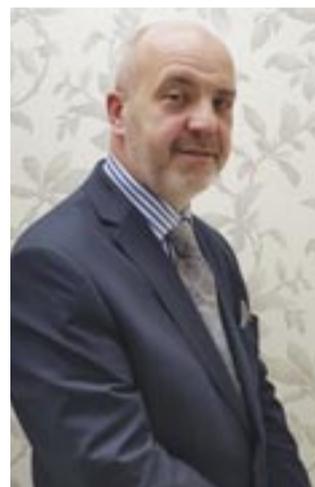
Either down by the Lake or at Java, because they do chocolate strawberries!

13. *Which character from fiction would you most like to be?*

Monica from Friends – because I'd love to have that apartment in New York!



**David Pope** dip FD MBIFD



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# New Mayor of Fylde Borough Council for 2022/23

“

*I have been a regular church attender, all my life and have always considered my faith to be a firm influence.*

”



**A former teacher, railway enthusiast, qualified pilot (including flying a glider), crown green bowls player and bridge player, gardener and reader has recently been installed as Mayor of Fylde Borough Council for 2022/23.**

**C**ouncillor Ben Aitken is a parishioner of St Joseph's Ansdell and he is married to Bernadette. They have three adult children. His Chaplain for his year of Office as Mayor is Fr Philip Newbold, a retired priest from the Archdiocese of Birmingham, who is now residing in Freckleton. Fr Philip will accompany Ben to Council Meetings where he will lead prayers before the business of the meeting is conducted.

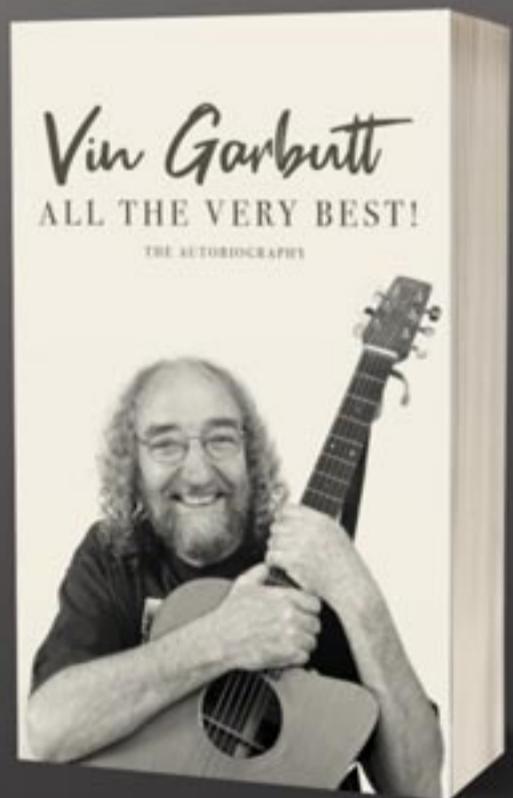
*faith kept my head up in difficult times, I cannot stress the help my faith has given me” said Ben*

A Civic Mass was celebrated by Fr Philip following Ben's installation attended by a host of local dignitaries and Councillors and parishioners. Refreshments were served afterwards in the Parish Hall.

Ben became involved in the creation of the Museum of Science and Industry in the 1970's, after viewing the decaying Liverpool Road Station in 1968. After writing a letter to the Manchester Evening News he was approached by the Victorian Society to assist in the formation of the Liverpool Road Station Society, the oldest surviving purpose-built passenger station in the world.

Born and raised in County Durham Ben's formative years were influenced by his Dad and Grandma who were both involved in supporting working class causes. He qualified as a teacher, in Manchester, in 1971 and taught Geography in two Secondary Schools in Salford, before changing to Special Needs and achieving a B.Ed and an Advanced Diploma in Special Educational Needs. "I worked for 23 years in SEN, it was a very difficult job with lots of obstacles but my

It soon became apparent that the stations rail tracks needed much work and Ben was a regular weekend worker. All this culminated in a cavalcade of vehicles through the busy shopping district of Manchester, a six week Great Railway Exposition Festival and a further cavalcade with Fred Dibna driving his steam roller with Ben as his co-pilot. All this led to Ben being invited to become a member of the Museum of Science and Industry Advisory Panel. Success followed, when Ben attended the opening of the newly created MOSi, by the HM the Queen in 1983.



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Ben told the *Catholic Voice* that *"It wasn't until the family moved to Ansdell, 25 years ago that caused me to consider joining a political party. This was mainly due to me looking at the state of the main road through Ansdell"*.

Ben told the *Catholic Voice* that initially he was a Co ordinator for Ansdell in Bloom before being elected as Councillor for the area in 2007. He served on Planning for 8 years, 2 as Vice Chair and 4 as Chairman before transferring to Environment, Health and Housing, serving as Chairman for 5 years.

Ben explained that *"the Mayoral Team aims to visit as many areas as we can across the Borough. We want to raise as much as we can for the Mayoral Charities, Trinity the Hospice in the Fylde, the Sea Scouts and the Citizen's Advice Bureau, a task which needs the support of all the community. Above all else we want to serve everyone who requires our assistance"*.

Another personal objective for Ben is the raising of funds to renovate Ansdell Institute. Built in 1909 it is, like St Joseph's Church, a Grade II listed

building. Even though the Institute has fallen into some disrepair over recent years it continues to be a vital hub for the local community. *"I am determined that this building is preserved for future generations"* said Ben.

Ben and Bernadette and the rest of the Mayoral team have had a busy start to their year in Office coinciding as it has done with the Platinum Jubilee of HM the Queen. One particular ceremony was the lighting of the Platinum Jubilee Beacon on Fairhaven Lake attended by many, many local residents despite the weather being slightly off-putting. A night of special significance.

Ben's many hobbies may have to take back seat as he fulfils the many commitments required of his Office but he and Bernadette are determined to attend as many events and functions as they physically can.

The *Catholic Voice* wishes Mayor Ben and Lady Mayoress Bernadette a Very Happy Mayoral Year!

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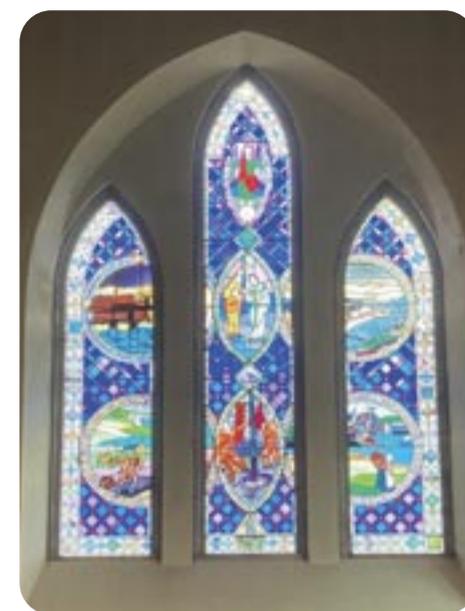
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## A Preston couple, Frank and Emma McGrath have recently returned from a holiday in Shetland and Emma has written the following about the church in Lerwick.

In true Catholic tradition, one of the rituals we observe when arriving in a holiday destination is locating the nearest Catholic church. This May we went to The Shetlands, a group of islands some 100 miles north of the north coast of Scotland, an overnight ferry crossing from Aberdeen. When we arrived in Lerwick, the capital of Shetland, we were not sure that there would be a Catholic church, but a quick Google located the church of St Margaret and the Sacred Heart less than half a mile from where we were staying.

Experience has taught us that these small church communities are refreshing places to visit. In a town like Preston where there is a plethora of churches it is easy for people to become complacent and lose their sense of community. When there is just one church and one priest who shares his time across several quite distant parishes, it creates a close knit community and the necessity for all members to contribute to the running of the parish. St Margaret's was no exception.

We were warmly welcomed and invited to coffee after mass but before that we were given a historical tour of the church by an enthusiastic parishioner. Like many of the people we met during our stay, he was not a native Shetlander, his roots lay elsewhere, in his case Glasgow. Indeed, the church itself owes its foundation to an incomer, Fr Verstraeten, a Belgian priest, the first resident priest since the Reformation, arriving in Lerwick in 1860. The story goes, that the last priest to serve at the time of the reformation, became a Protestant, got married and had several children and many descendants who are now scattered across the Shetlands.

Fr Verstraeten served for 12 years in the "Arctic Pole Mission". From Shetland he ministered to Orkney and Caithness. The mission covered the North Atlantic up to the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland. Six young Belgian priests – led by Fr Stefan Djunkowski – cared for this area for 15 years. It included the fishing boats, the summer visitors and seasonal workers, notably

the many Irishwomen who came to gut and clean the herrings at Lerwick. A wealthy local Catholic woman was so appalled by the conditions in which the priests had to conduct Mass for these workers that she provided funding for the church in Lerwick.

When Fr Verstraeten came to Lerwick it was a predominantly protestant community and he is credited with doing much to unite the community and overcome the ill feeling towards Catholics. He earned his place as a well-respected member of the community.

In May 1871, a Belgian fishing boat, Le Mare, anchored off Lerwick, sending out a signal that there was disease on board. The town's medical officer spoke to Fr Verstraeten, explaining that the vessel needed to anchor further away from the town and be quarantined. Fr Verstraeten volunteered to go aboard the vessel to explain the situation and take medical supplies. The disease on board was smallpox and everyone on board recovered apart from Fr Verstraeten who saved the Shetland Islands from infection but contracted the disease himself and died four days later, aged 39. The town council expressed their gratitude and paid tribute to his good work, a copy of which is proudly displayed on a plaque in the church.

Today's catholic community at St. Margaret's is a diverse one. We were introduced to the choir, made up of several Filipino ladies who had married Shetlanders. The organist was from mainland Scotland, the adult altar server, from Preston. The parish priest, Fr Ambrose, was from the south of England.

The church boasts a beautiful stain glass window, a quite recent addition. It depicts the island's present and the past, including the oil industry which has brought prosperity as well as the farming and fishing traditions. St Margaret's is a thriving small Catholic community and a joy to visit, as indeed are the Shetland Islands.



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**St. Margaret Mary, Sclegate Road, Carlisle**  
 Saturdays at 10.00 am  
**Sung Masses for Holy Souls:**  
 Saturdays 2nd July & 6th August at 10.00 am

**Shrine Church of St Walburge, Preston**  
 Mondays – Fridays: 8.30 am, Low Mass  
 Saturdays: 8.30 am, Low Mass  
 Sundays: 10.30 am, Sung Mass

**Shrine of the English Martyrs, Preston**  
 Mondays – Saturdays: 12 noon, Low Mass  
 Sundays: 9.00 am, Low Mass  
 (Please check the website for any variations:  
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**Our Lady & St Michael, Banklands, Workington**  
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**St Mary's, Main Street, Hornby**  
 Saturdays at 11.00 am  
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# Breaking News

**T**he Lytham St Annes Action Impact Group consisting of Ava, Layla, Gemma and Isabelle from St Bede' High School will be travelling to London in July for a Celebrating Young People's Award Ceremony hosted by Million Minutes on the Terrace Pavilion at the House of Commons.

We will bring you more news about this event and details on how the girls got on in our September edition. The girls have been selected as one of three shortlisted nominees for the Barbara Ward Award.



The event is being hosted by Siobhain McDonagh MP, and she will be joined by a number of esteemed guests, including His Eminence, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, The Rt Rev Ralph Heskett C.Ss.R (Bishop of Hallam, and Bishop for Youth), The Rt Rev Terrence Drainey (Bishop of Middlesbrough and Chair of Caritas Social Action Network), and Barry & Margaret Mizen.

  
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[www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate)

## Columban Missionaries visit Preston School



**R**ecently our Faith in Action Group at Our Lady's High School Preston were involved in a Justice and Peace Day. This was led by James Trewby from the Columban Missionaries. The pupils spent the day learning about how we can make a difference to the lives of others across the world by changing the way we live and by taking action. Our focus was on human and environmental rights.

CAFOD has asked us to appeal to the government to introduce a new Human Rights and Environment Act to hold businesses to account when they fail to prevent human rights abuses and cause harm to the environment.

Our day involved laughter, games, discussion and writing to Ben Wallace MP in Preston.

You can join the campaign and sign the petition by going to:  
<https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/93929/action/1>

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## Julia McClelland of St Mary's, Cleator reports on the first ever flower festival to be held in the church as part of their 150 year anniversary celebrations.

Over the weekend of 13-15 May 2022, St Mary's Church in Cleator was in full bloom! Welcoming well over 1,000 visitors from the local community and beyond, to view the first flower festival ever held in the Church. This event was part of a number of celebrations planned to mark the 150th anniversary of the church.

The theme of Create, Celebrate and Encounter was designed to pay tribute to the people responsible for founding and building the church and to celebrate the working life of the church throughout its history to the present and into the future.

The Encounter element was the seven sacraments, depicted in flowers designed to share our faith with our visitors.

There were also displays to remember service and sacrifice and a specially created display to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. A prayer tree to remember all those whose lives were lost to Covid-19 offered an area for quiet reflection. Solidarity with the people of Ukraine was expressed with a simple floral arrangement with an opportunity to donate to the DEC Humanitarian Appeal running in parallel over the weekend. The Flower Festival was a huge ecumenical effort with all of

the local church flower arrangers coming together to support the small team from St Mary's and with the help of our friends in Egremont Flower Club an extravaganza of flowers was created. The festival was opened by the MP for Copeland Trudy Harrison who also created a display especially for the church. Invited guests including the elected Mayor and local councillors along with local clergy who were also in attendance for the ribbon cutting ceremony. As Parish Priest Fr G Paul Johnstone said in his introduction "we are led to give joyful thanks for the wonder of God's creation and our part in it. God reaches out to us in many ways. We draw close to Him in prayer and in the sacraments of the church. I hope as you walk around our church you will see in the beauty of the flowers a sign of God's love for us and His desire to draw close to us bringing joy and peace".

This Flower Festival forms part of several months of celebrations, which includes a concert with renowned soprano Joan Rodgers (CBE), a parish and community evening celebration, publication of "a new history of St Mary's", which has been specifically written by our Parish Historian to mark this anniversary year. Central to all of these events is a celebratory Mass on 23 June, with Bishop Paul Swarbrick as the Principal Celebrant.



## Day for Life ... Continued from Page 1

His Holiness Pope Francis sent cordial greetings and good wishes to those who participated in the 2022 day for life celebrated in Scotland, England and Wales, and Ireland under the theme “Caring for the Older Person”.

His Holiness prayed that the efforts in the defence of the God-given value and dignity of every human life, in all its stages, will be fruitful in drawing attention to the particular worth of our elderly brothers and sisters, for they “are not outcasts to be shunned but living signs of the goodness of God who bestows life in abundance” (message for the Second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly).

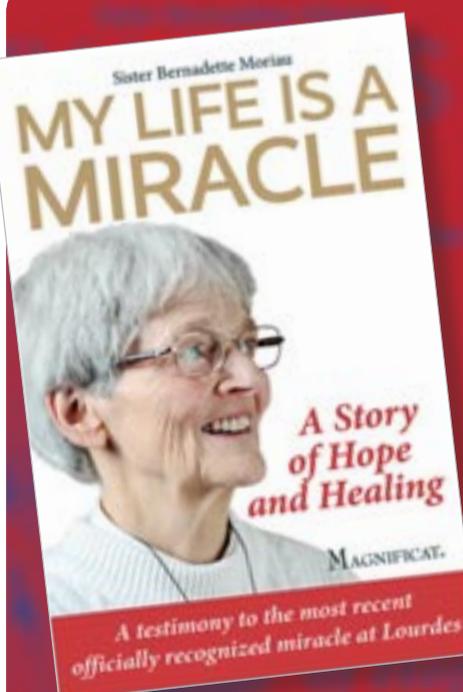
He likewise trusts that a greater awareness of the essential contribution the elderly make to the spiritual and material wellbeing of every society will help to counter the “throwaway culture” and foster the bonds of charity and fraternity between the generations.

With these sentiments and the assurance of his closeness in prayer, the Holy Father sent his blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life.

Courtesy of CBCEW

## My Life is a Miracle: Sr Bernadette Moriau

### Summary of her book by Brian Mckenna, St Patricks, Dumbarton



**‘Rise, take up your mat and walk.’**

**D**iagnosed with chronic back pain in 1966, when she was just 27 years old, Sister Bernadette has long felt the impact of illness on her life. She suffered from acute sciatic nerve pain and other medical impairments, which forced her to stop practicing nursing in 1975. After 40 years of battling her illness, her doctor encouraged her to join the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.

The visit was not Sister Bernadette’s first trip to Lourdes, but it was her first trip as a sick pilgrim. The travel was agonizing. Fortunately, the morphine eased the pain.

Lourdes, for Sister Bernadette, was a place of peace. There in the grotto is the still power of God. An unmoving, spiritual, mystical presence. So accessible to all. So close to the little ones. To the poor. To the afflicted.

She had been to Lourdes before. This time, she had resigned herself to her suffering. She went to Lourdes looking

not for healing, but to pray, asking God for a conversion of heart and for strength to carry on.

Describing the famous processions of the sick at Lourdes, this strange, almost baroque convoy with crutches poking out every which way, with its wonderful volunteers pushing or pulling and always with a smile—what is it? It’s the train of Hope. Hope is perhaps the greatest gift pilgrims receive at Lourdes, knowing the healing and mercy of God, particularly through the sacrament of penance.

While at Lourdes, Sister Bernadette had what might only be described as a mystical experience during the evening Eucharistic procession. At the moment the bishop blessed me, Christ asked me deep in my heart to offer him everything. Everything. To hold nothing back for myself. To expect nothing. No comfort. No healing. To give myself totally to him. To give, not to take. Never before had she had such an experience of God. She was content to return home, having received

the special grace of his presence and peace.

By July 11, 2008, Sister Bernadette had returned home to her convent. While at prayer that evening, something strange happened. She felt a great relaxing of her body, like a warmth from her heart suffusing everything. That warmth filled her. She didn’t know what was happening to her. She went on praying.

Then, she went back to her room. There I heard an inner voice telling her: ‘Take off your braces.’ She immediately thought of the words of Christ in the Gospel: ‘Rise, take up your mat and walk.’ Without the slightest hesitation, without a moment’s thought about what was happening to her, she took off all her paraphernalia: her leg splint, her corset, all of it. She felt perfectly well. In an instant, she had been healed.

The paperback can be purchased on-line by putting the title in the search engine and following the instruction.

# Holy Land Co-ordination - Easter visit by Bishops



Mass on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord on the Mount of Olives.

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**A** group of Catholic Bishops from across Europe gathered in Jerusalem for the annual Holy Land Coordination - visiting from 21–26 May 2022.

The bishops stood in solidarity with the local Christian communities and expressed their support through the four P's:

- Prayer
- Pilgrimage
- Pressure
- Presence

Pastoral visits to celebrate Mass with the faithful were an important aspect of the Coordination. In 2022, the bishops visited parishes in Jerusalem and the West Bank on Sunday, 22 May.

The Coordination group also met with local church leaders including the Latin Patriarch, officials in the patriarchate, and Catholic charities serving people in Jerusalem, the West Bank and wider region.

The bishops, by their presence, hope to remind the “living stones” of the Christian communities in the Holy Land that they are not forgotten by their brothers and

sisters in other parts of the world.

***‘If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand wither’ - Psalm 137:5***

Jerusalem is a Jewish city, a Christian city, a Muslim city. It must remain a common patrimony and never become the exclusive monopoly of any one religion. We came to meet and pray with our sisters and brothers, mindful of Patriarch Pizzaballa’s message that it is our right and duty as Christians to uphold the city’s openness and universality.

The Christian community is essential to Jerusalem’s identity, both now and for the future. Yet its continued presence is threatened by occupation and injustice. Many of those we encountered are facing violence and intimidation by settler groups, restrictions on their freedom of movement, or separation from their families because of the status they are assigned.

We share the concerns expressed by the Christian community about unilateral restrictions on freedom of worship during Easter, imposed by the Israeli police. We experienced the deep sorrow and anger felt by local Christians at the killing of Palestinian Catholic journalist Shireen



*Bishops Pay Condolences to Family of Christian Palestinian Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.*

Abu Akleh and the shameful attack on mourners at her funeral.

We witnessed how many people of all backgrounds are living in poverty, which has been compounded by the pandemic. The absence of pilgrims during the past two years has devastated livelihoods, including among Jerusalem's Christian community, leaving some families struggling to afford housing, food, or other essentials.

Amid these challenges, there are nevertheless signs of hope. We visited Christian organisations taking responsibility for the wellbeing of their community and wider society. They are working tirelessly to alleviate hardship and improve lives. We met young people who, despite facing daily violations of their fundamental human rights, refuse to be the last generation of Christians in the city.

As pilgrims return once more, we call upon them to support Christians in Jerusalem and throughout the Holy Land. It is essential that all pilgrims understand and engage with the reality of life for the Christian community here. A true Holy Land pilgrimage should be a journey of faith, encounter, and solidarity.

Pope Francis affirms the universal value of Jerusalem, which goes beyond any consideration of territorial issues.

Inspired by Christ our Peace, all Christians must help preserve the city's sacred character and promote an authentic vision for Jerusalem as a place of dialogue and unity.

*Jerusalem – 26th May 2022  
Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord*

**Bishop Declan Lang**  
Chair of the Holy Land Coordination  
England and Wales

**Bishop Udo Bentz**  
Germany

**Bishop Peter Bürcher**  
Nordic and Swiss Bishops' Conference

**Bishop Nicholas Hudson**  
Commission of the Bishops' Conferences  
of the European Union

**Bishop Alan McGuckian**  
Ireland

**Archbishop William Nolan**  
Scotland

**A request for help**

**Pat McCamley travelled on a Jumbulance in April to help out on a trip to Lourdes, following a two-year absence due to Covid.**

Pat, a group leader and nurse from the Isle of Wight, made the trip as a volunteer. Jumbulances are custom-built coach ambulances especially built to provide long-distance transport for people whose medical or physical condition makes normal methods of travel either impossible or impractical. They are used to provide transport from the UK to Christian pilgrimage centre to Lourdes in south-west France for the seriously ill and disabled. Priority is given to people with a terminal illness and those confined to bed or a wheelchair.

Pat said it was fantastic to be back in Lourdes with Across and that she always finds it humbling and so worthwhile to make a difference in the lives of others not as fortunate as she is. These trips to Lourdes would not be possible without nurses, and Across would certainly welcome the help of any other nurse who wishes to be a travel volunteer.

The Jumbulance consists of 24 people, 10 of whom are sick or disabled. The other 14 are volunteer carers, nurses and/or a doctor and a chaplain, who all give their spare time freely and pay their own expenses.

For details of how to volunteer, call Lisa O'Connor at Across on 020 3542 1800, email [contactus@across.org.uk](mailto:contactus@across.org.uk) or visit [across.org.uk](http://across.org.uk).

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