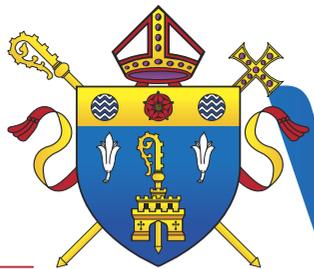


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The Catholic



VOICE

of Lancaster

The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 350 + June '23

INSIDE: pg6-7

Bishop encounters vibrant Catholic Church in Pakistan punching above its weight



Let us Pray

Let us Pray

O God, to whom every human power is subject, grant to your servant our sovereign Charles success in the exercise of his high office, so that, always revering you and striving to please you, he may constantly secure and preserve for the people entrusted to his care the freedom that comes from civil peace.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity

of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen

V: O Lord, save Charles, our King.

R: And hear us on the day we call upon you.

V: O Lord, hear my prayer.

R: And let my cry come before you.

V: The Lord be with you.

R: And with your spirit.

Almighty God, we pray, that your

servant Charles, our King, who, by your providence has received the governance of this realm, may continue to grow in every virtue, that, imbued with your heavenly grace, he may be preserved from all that is harmful and evil and, being blessed with your favour may, with his consort and the royal family, come at last into your presence, through Christ who is the way, the truth and the life and who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Amen



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God Save the King!

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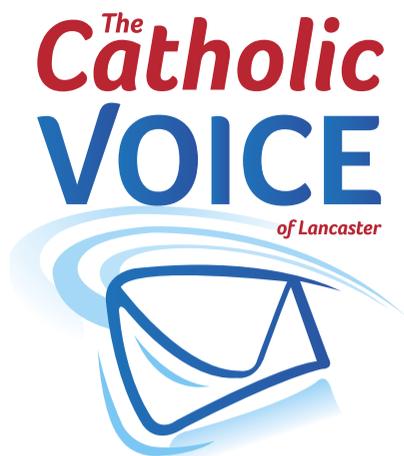
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**CONTACT US:**

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**EDITOR:**  
Edwina Gillett  
01253 736630 / 07969 967268  
edwinagillett@hotmail.co.uk

**ADVERTISING:**  
Charlotte Rosbrooke / CathCom Ltd.  
01440 730399 / 07932 248225  
charlotter@cathcom.org  
www.cathcom.org

**DESIGN & LAYOUT:**  
Rob Hotchkiss / Hot Creative  
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rob@hot-creative.co.uk  
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020 7112 6710  
www.cathcom.org

**Articles to:**  
voicenews@hotmail.co.uk

**Letters to:**  
voicelatters@hotmail.co.uk

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**  
FAO Edwina Gillett  
99 Commonsides, Ansdell,  
Lytham St. Annes FY8 4DJ

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# Feast of St Joseph Celebrated

**O**n Friday 17 March, St Joseph's Catholic Primary school in Preston, celebrated our patron St Joseph.

Each year we attend Mass in church and sing our special 'St Joseph was a carpenter' song and then continue the celebrations in school with learning activities about St Joseph and Hot Cross buns for all the children.

This year was made particularly special as we were kindly donated a beautiful statue of St Joseph's by the Carmelites Nuns in Preston. The statue was placed in church and Blessed by Father Simon Hawksworth. It is always such a wonderful day and the children respond with reverence and prayer. We would like to send a special thank you to the Carmelite Nuns for their generosity and service to Preston. The statue will be a reminder to the children for many years to come and the children who attended the service will always remember being part of such a special celebration.

*Catherine Monaghan, Headteacher*

**The prayer to St Joseph resonates with all who work in our school:**

*Glorious St. Joseph, model of all those who are devoted to labour, obtain for me the grace to work conscientiously, putting the call of duty above my many sins; to work with thankfulness and joy, considering it an honour to employ and develop, by means of labour, the gifts received from God; to work with order, peace, prudence and patience, never surrendering to weariness or difficulties; to work, above all, with purity of intention, and with detachment from self, having always death before my eyes and the account which I must render of time lost, of talents wasted, of good omitted, of vain complacency in success so fatal to the work of God. All for Jesus, all for Mary, all after thy example, O Patriarch Joseph. Such shall be my motto in life and death. Amen. St Joseph, pray for us.*



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# MATTERS

## YOUTH



I started last month's notes by saying that there was a lot going on in the Youth Service. Last month that was true. Right now though... well, let's just say that Easter is almost always one of the quietest times of the year. Some nice stuff happened during Holy Week and the first few weeks of the Easter Season though, which are worth a few words...

### It's Easter Alleluia!

For quite a while now, we have run our annual Easter Retreat every year during Holy Week (okay, apart from that year where everyone wasn't allowed out) and this year was no exception. A total of 15 people journeyed together from Holy Thursday through to Easter Sunday and we got some great feedback afterwards.

We were fortunate enough to have three Friars from the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal join us for the retreat – two priests and one brother. Having them with us meant that we were able to celebrate the Sacraments at Castlerigg, which isn't always something we can guarantee these days!

People started arriving on Thursday afternoon and we had a bit of time to get to know each other before the retreat began in earnest. After having some time to get used to our groups, we then went into the Maundy Thursday Mass – the first major liturgy of the Easter Triduum. Everyone present had their feet washed and Father Isaac preached about the need to let Jesus reach every part of our lives – even those parts of us that are more uncomfortable – hence the link to the washing of feet.

After the Mass, we all went upstairs to our altar of repose for a time of watching.

The next day started with morning prayer and the main focus of the day was the Good Friday service, preceded by our Stations of the Cross right through the middle of Keswick. We walked with our rather large cross through the town centre, along the Lakeside and then back home via Castlehead, stopping at various points for reflections on the different stations. We got quite the reaction from shoppers and tourists – a nice witness which will hopefully move a few hearts!

On Saturday we had a reflection in the morning followed by a more chilled out afternoon.

We headed to Workington in the evening for the climax of the Easter Retreat – the vigil. We tried to get across to the young people that the Easter Retreat, for Catholics, is the biggest party of the year – okay, not quite liturgical or theological language, but hopefully it made some sense!

We were very grateful to the Fr Philip and the parish for letting us join their vigil and it was a lovely occasion. It was especially nice seeing two people (not from our group, alas) getting received into the Church and Confirmed. God is good!

We then headed back to Castlerigg for Easter Eggs and a bit of a party to celebrate the resurrection, before everybody went home tired but happy the next day.

Easter Sunday was also the last day of

term for our staff who headed back to their families for a well-earned holiday.

These were some of the comments we received after the retreat:

*"I enjoyed how the retreat made me think of things in a different way, and I also enjoyed how relaxed it was."*

*"I enjoyed the talks in the main room, Paddie's morning prayer reflection, and I enjoyed the walk with the cross especially, but it was all good"*

Our next open retreat – for anyone aged 15+ – will be our Advent Retreat this December. Check our website or social media (or indeed these pages) for more information on that later in the year.

After the Easter Retreat ended those of us who stayed behind at Castlerigg enjoyed another (albeit more recent) annual tradition at Castlerigg – the visit of the CFRs. The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (of whom three were already with us for the Easter Retreat) usually stay with us during Easter Week and Low Week for their annual retreat and conference – and that's all of the Friars from the UK and Ireland, around 30 in total. It's always wonderful having them in the house. It's nice to see them relaxing and enjoying one another's company, and they bring so much to us!

All in all, it's been a nice few weeks. We are now gearing up for a very busy term of school retreats – equally nice but probably not quite as relaxing!

**And Talking of Retreats...**

We recently did a bit of a tally to see how many schools are currently using Castlerigg. The answer is that in 2022-23 we will be dealing with 43 separate schools. Of those, 30 are high schools and 13 are primary. 16 come from our own Diocese and 27 from beyond. 6 schools are joining us for the first time this year (or after a long break) and at present we have two additional schools booked in for 2023-24 with a handful more enquiring! In other words, we are proving popular at the minute!

### What's Coming up?

#### Lourdes Youth

The Youth Section of the Lourdes Pilgrimage are still looking for people, so if you're interested, contact Joe Walsh Tours on 0808 1890458

#### Advent Retreat 2023

The next open retreat for young people at Castlerigg will be our Advent Retreat. We're not taking bookings just yet, but put the (provisional) date in your diary – December 8-10th 2023.

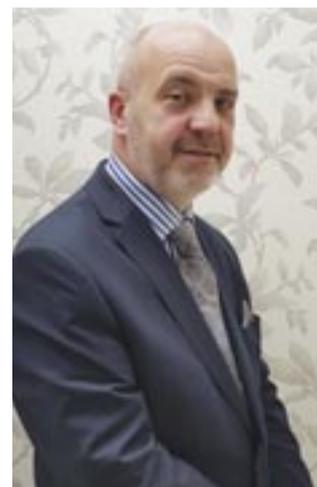
### A Few More Things ...

#### Sponsor a Youth Minister

As we mentioned last month we have recently launched a new scheme to help support our gap year volunteers. It's just £10 a month and it gives people the chance to get directly involved with the work of Castlerigg and the Youth Service. More details on our website.



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# Bishop encounters vibrant Catholic Church in Pakistan punching above its weight



**B**ishop Tom Neylon made the visit to Pakistan in his capacity as Lead Bishop for Asia for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales at the invitation of Aid to the Church in Need who organised the visit. ACN UK's website can be found at: [acnuk.org](http://acnuk.org)

Visiting from 9-16 March, Bishop Neylon visited a number of projects funded by the charity and met with the faithful, priests and bishops in the major cities of Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Lahore and Faisalabad.

Making reference to the fact that Church attendance in Pakistan is very strong, Bishop Neylon received a warm welcome and explained how, at one Friday afternoon Mass in Rawalpindi, there were over 1,000 worshipers in the cathedral with many more outside unable to get in.

*"The Church is very strong. It's very much a minority – between one and two percent of the population would be Christian/Catholic and there are other minority faiths and religions in the country as well. Even though there are a small number of Catholics, in terms of the attendance at church – the place was full..."*

*"The evidence we saw, without any kind of prodding or probing, was the number of people who would turn up for prayer or for Mass – there's something like a 70% practice rate among the local Catholic*

*population. So, given the environment in which they live, where there can be discrimination of minorities, and well-documented cases where there's been violence or even killings associated with places of worship, people make a deliberate choice to say, 'yes, I want to live my faith. I want to practise my faith. I want to share my faith with my children.'"*

Speaking on our Catholic News podcast strand, Bishop Neylon discusses how education is a key priority in the dioceses he visited.

*"The education for young people, for young adults as well, [is very important] to try and lift them out of poverty, to seek qualifications to get them into the civil service, so they're able then to join the wider community in serving Pakistan's society through the civil service network." He also praised the Catholic Church for delivering education and healthcare services that provide for wider society and not just their own community.*

*"We heard stories that there are Catholic schools and Catholic hospitals, but they serve the wider community as well. They're not just in an enclave or a ghetto, but they're there really to serve the wider society. I think in terms of education, there's something like 300 Catholic schools across the whole of Pakistan, and very often some of the schools are well subscribed by people not of Christian or Catholic faith, but the majority of people in the population." CBEW*



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- St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School (3-4 year olds)
- St. Wulstan & St. Edmund's Catholic Academy (3-4 year olds)

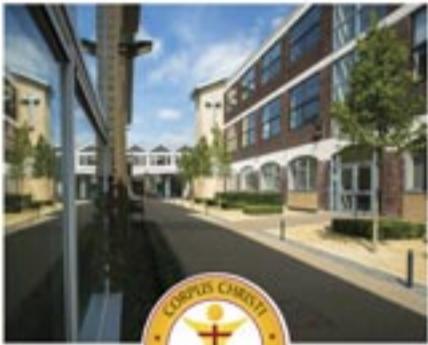


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# Fr Frank Flynn RIP Requiem Mass Homily

**W**hen I was first ordained priest in 1990, I was appointed to St Joseph's parish in Preston. Amongst other things we had a thriving parish club. In the summer of 1991 then parish priest, Mgr. Paddy O'Dea took his usual summer holiday trip to Limerick. Before he left, he told me that the bishop would soon move him to another parish, but couldn't say where, or who would replace him. A week or so later I was in the parish club, and a parishioner came up to me to and said that he thought that the new parish priest was an excellent choice and asked whether I thought so too. I confessed that I didn't know, and a bit like the story of the journey to Emmaus, it was as if I was the only person in Jerusalem who hadn't heard of the happenings of the last three days. And thus, I found out that Frank would be my new PP.

Now, one of Saint Joseph's club's claims to fame was that it was one of only a small number of Catholic clubs in the Preston area which had the luxury of possessing its own bowling green. For some reason unbeknown to most of us, the bowling season always opened on Good Friday, and Father Frank decided it was time to tackle this issue head-on and so went to a club committee meeting where he challenged the practice, pointing out that, given its solemnity, Good Friday was perhaps not the most appropriate day to begin the bowling season and to be swigging beer. He suggested that it could quite easily be accommodated by moving it one day either way.

However, the committee had been forewarned and had prepared their counter argument. No sooner had Frank finished, than they retorted back "but Father you know it's called Good Friday - it's not a day to be miserable and sad; this is a day when we should be rejoicing and being happy at what Jesus did for us." The matter was eventually resolved in Frank's favour, and the bowls were rolled away on Holy Saturday morning.

In a sense however the committee were right. The Easter story is good news, not just for us but for the whole of humanity past present and future. It is also intrinsically linked to the priesthood - specifically to the one priesthood of Jesus

Christ which is shared with those people we call ministerial ordained priests.

A week or so ago, many of us gathered around our Bishop for the Chrism Mass. Not only are the holy oils for the coming year blessed, but the priests also renew their promises. During his homily the bishop reminded us that the renewal of those promises and the easter triduum services are linked.

He said "The obvious first image for us to note is that this evening, at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, Our Blessed Lord instituted the Sacred Priesthood. It is the anniversary therefore of our ordination as His priests. The striking posture we adopted on the day of our ordination - our prostration - will be repeated tomorrow afternoon at the beginning of the celebration of the Lord's Passion."

And of course, at that Passion, we honour and recall the sacrificial death of Jesus on the Cross for the sins of the world, including our own. The Lord who the night before took bread and said, "This is my body which will be given up for you", now freely and literally gives that body for us. If anyone asks what the job of a priest is, the most obvious answer is to say Mass. We might put that a slightly different way and say that the job of the priest is to do just what Jesus told us to do; remembering that as part of the words of consecration over the chalice, six final words are included - "Do this in memory of me." And that of course is what the Church has faithfully done across the world and across the last 2000 years, and also what Father Frank has done for nearly 58 years since his ordination on 12th June 1965. He has lived out his priesthood for a long time. In fact, he was ordained before I was born - just saying.

Looking at the words of today's gospel reading, should perhaps recognise the significance of these words of Peter in the opening lines of the gospel "I am going fishing." This isn't the desire of a man wanting to pass a bit of time pursuing his hobby, but perhaps rather someone going back to what he is familiar with - turning the clock back, if you like. Once again, we find ourselves listening to a story that occurs in the period

between the resurrection of Jesus and the explosion of the Church onto the streets at Pentecost. These were probably very strange days, with the apostles not quite knowing what to do or even what was happening next.

These must also have been days of uncertainty. The apostles did know and accept the truth that Jesus was risen - they had seen him - but somehow, they failed to fully assimilate this or understand its real significance - this would take time.

We have the benefit of 20:20 hindsight and years of Church tradition; we should not, therefore, perhaps expect everything to have fallen into place straightaway for the apostles.

And there is perhaps a lesson for us here also. The apostles didn't really fully understand the resurrection and perhaps nor do we. As the meaning of what had happened eventually sank in, the resurrection was to completely transform the lives and outlook of the apostles, who then went to the ends of the earth to proclaim the good news. Peter could have gone back to the fishing, to what he knew and was familiar with and what would earn him his daily bread, but he didn't; and I suppose the question to us is are we willing to let the power of the resurrection transform our outlook and our lives as we celebrate it during this Easter season?

If the reading had moved on a few more verses, we would have heard the three-fold question of Jesus to Peter, "Do you love me?" and the associated "Feed my sheep." What I think is important here during this encounter is the subtle shift that occurs in the focus on 'fisherman' to 'shepherd'. Jesus has already told some of his disciples that they will become fishers-of-men; he has also told them that he is the Good Shepherd. What happens now with the command "Feed my sheep" is that mantle of good shepherd is also transferred to the disciples also so that they are both fishers-of-men and shepherds.

The good shepherd cares for his sheep. A fisherman goes out to get a catch. These two roles, equal in weight represent two

faces of the Church's life, and perhaps especially of priesthood.

The shepherding role is that of caring for those who belong to the flock, whereas the role of fishing represents the missionary activity of the Church as a community that reaches out into the world. Both should be equally represented in the life of the Church.

Several years ago I was lucky enough to be part of a group who were given permission to visit the strict Carthusian monastery at Parkminster West Sussex. The monks there spend most of their lives in prayer, silence and in simplicity. The monastery is remote, has thick imposing walls and no TV or radios - only a daily newspaper come in. One of our party asked if the monks felt isolated behind such walls and got the reply that although the walls are indeed high and solid, nevertheless the monks like to imagine them as walls of glass that let them see out into the world, so that they can understand the needs of others and pray for them.

The point of the story is that if a community which of its nature is so isolated, can try to reach out into the world, then those of us who do live in the world should be able and willing to do this all the more. We too need to balance in our spirituality these two facets of Church life. Those who desire to be fishermen need to remember the nourishment of the sheep, and those who like to be nourished, also need to remember that we have a mission to go out, and that the Church does not simply exist for itself.

Throughout the Easter season we reflect on the resurrection and also on the nature and consequences of our baptism, particularly the Christian vocation we all have. In a few weeks' time the 4th Sunday of Easter, is a worldwide day of prayer for vocations to priesthood, diaconate and the consecrated life. As we pray, we ask the Lord not only to call people to serve him in consecrated life in the Church, but also that despite the noise of a busy world, those whom he calls will hear his voice and be willing to respond with generosity, rather than simply choosing to go fishing. *Canon Paul Embery VG*

## Fr Frank Flynn's eulogy given by his brother at his Requiem Mass at St Peter's Lytham on 14 March 2023

**W**elcome Priests concelebrating with Fr Embery, family, friends, carers and former parishioners

The Priests are wearing white vestments as we are in Easter Week – Frank could not have arranged it better as it is also a tribute to his beloved PNE, the Lilywhites.

Born in 1938 in Barrow – in – Furness in his grandma's house in Duncan Street where many an Irish family lived. He was taken home to Walney Island where mam and dad had bought 17 Latona Street. My dad had been born in the same back street at 10 NIOBE St and having moved a whole 6 houses away and one street lived there for 90 years.

Frank loved Walney, St Gabriel's and its people. In 1965 he was ordained at St Columbas'. He was the first young man from the Parish to be ordained. If the truth be known we – Frank and myself – very nearly didn't make the occasion. The day before Father Joe Maley picked us up from Upholland College and drove us in a borrowed saloon – Joe drove not just fast, but very fast up the M6. At Lancaster, a tyre blew out: our guardian angels saw us swerve across 3 lanes and land safely on the hard shoulder. The ordination was wonderful, and Frank's ministry began.

He was a home bird. Every Monday on his day off he left our Lady's & St Edward's in Fulwood and went home to see his mam and dad. Mam would cook dinner, dad and our sister Kathleen would come in from work, and they would spend time together not just eating but catching up on news.

I was due to start teaching in 1971 and Frank persuaded me to look for a job in Preston. I was appointed to the Catholic high school in Fulwood and Frank found me digs with one of his parishioners. Unfortunately, as I moved in, he moved out to become the Bishop's secretary. After 3 years with the Bishop he was appointed to the Diocesan Education department where he became director for education. In 1982 he served on the coordinating committee for the Pope's visit to England – he helped organise the visit to Heaton Park. On the back of this, he was invited to go to Buckingham Palace – I can't see him enjoying cucumber sandwiches but I'm sure there would have been plenty of black coffee – 2 sugars please!

He served at Christ the King, Blackpool and St Joseph's in Preston. I met a prison officer who remembered Frank very fondly as being a friendly face for the prisoners to talk to. It was about this time he helped to found SPRED – a group who brought religious education to those with special needs. The organisation is still going and wanted me to bring Frank's work in this field to your attention.

In 1990 Frank celebrated his silver jubilee. The photos in the mass booklet were taken on that occasion. This was the last time we all came together to celebrate as our sister Kathleen passed away in 1994. It was a great blow to us all. We have been blessed to have had a priest in the family who has hatched, matched and dispatched our loved ones.

In 1996 Frank came to Lytham. This was his final parish before retirement. I know that the people here loved him, and he loved you. My sister, Kathleen, and her husband, Peter, bequeathed a pot of money to be used on the renovation of this church. There is a plaque bearing their names just over there. Frank may have left Lytham, but he left behind many happy memories and a little corner of the church which is a reminder of our family.

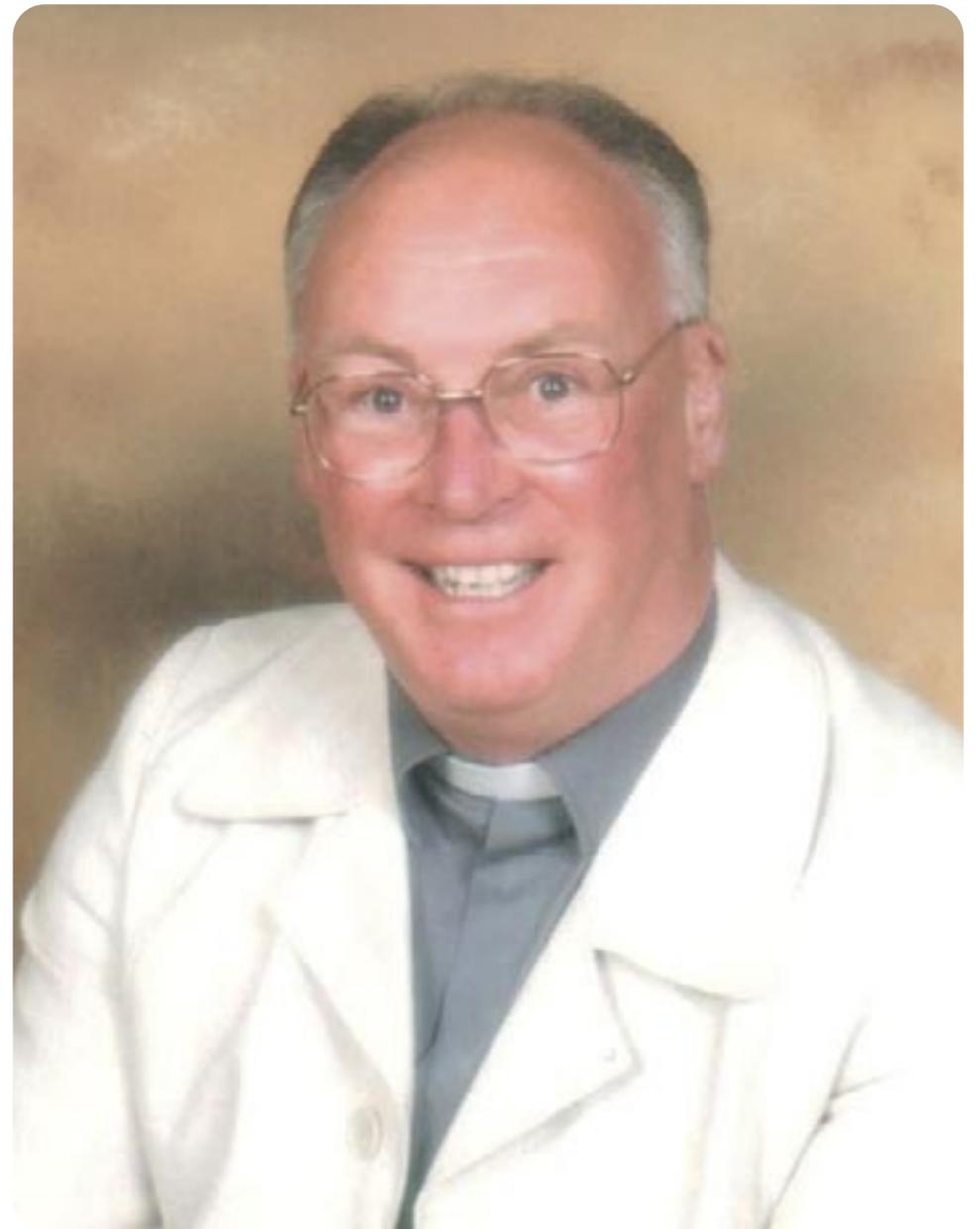
When he was 75, in 2014, he retired and went back to where it all began – Walney Island. In retirement, he loved helping out in the parish and particularly loved saying mass for the primary school. The youngsters never forgot him when he had to leave to go into the care home. Just before he died, he got a beautifully illustrated Easter card and stations of the cross from them. How lovely was that?

In 2019, he went to McCauley Mount care home in Padiham near Burnley owned by the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy. They gave Frank 4 years of superb care and attention and told me whilst he was in hospital that they wanted him home with them so he could pass his last days in comfort and with familiar faces around him. This reminded me so much of the care that sister Katy and the convent here of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion provided for our mam.

I must mention Father Peter Draper who did so much for me to get Frank into McCauley Mount – without his support I doubt if Frank would have been there. Also, the great people on Walney who made the first 4 years of his retirement so enjoyable. And Father Embery for leading our Mass today. And a final very big thank you to David Pope, our undertaker, who has been instrumental in putting together our services. At this difficult and stressful time, he has been a pillar of support.

I began by mentioning the Lilywhites – how fitting it was that Frank died on Friday 31 March and the following day, PNE played their arch-rivals Blackpool. It was a beautifully sunny day and as PNE took to the pitch, I knew there was an extra player on their side. Well done, Frank, we won 3-1. Frank was a lovely, lovely man, brother, relative and priest.

***We will all miss him dearly.***



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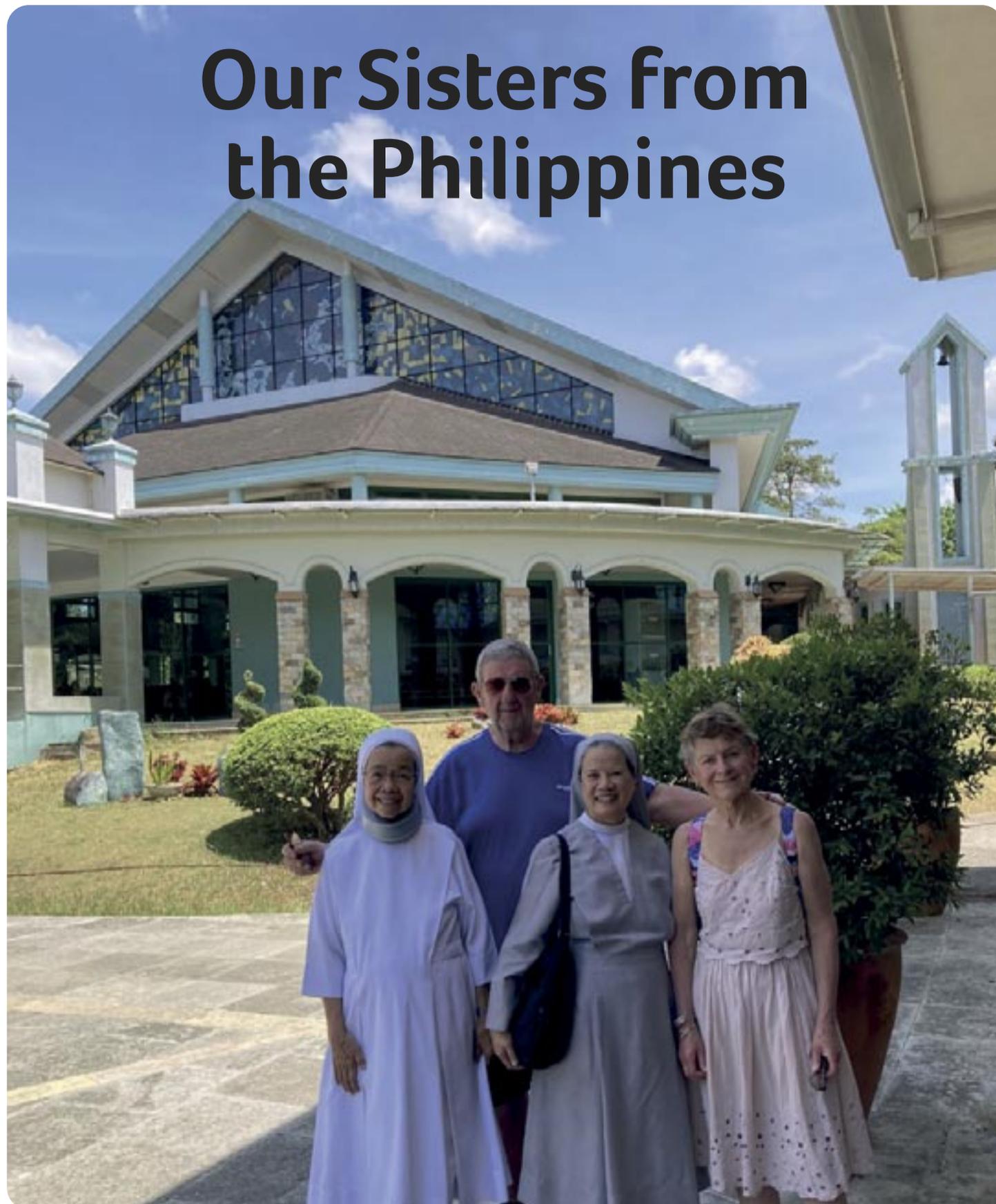
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SCAN ME



# Our Sisters from the Philippines

**The Philippines is a country of stark contrasts. On the one hand you witness extreme poverty with many people living in shanty towns and on the other huge shopping malls to rival those of any major city in the world. What both extremes share is a strong affiliation to Christianity, predominantly Catholicism.**

It is from this tradition that our two Sisters, Sister Maria Dee and Sister Shienrose, Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres, come. They have been missionary sisters in the UK since 2015, for part of that time working in Grasmere and Ambleside. Since January 2021 they have been based in our parish, Our Lady & St Edward's Fulwood, Preston, and the adjoining parish of St. Mary's Newhouse. Our former presbytery is now their convent.

Though the sisters come from a country that is economically very poor, it has a very rich Catholic heritage and a vibrant church. My husband Frank and I have come to know the sisters well and when we learnt that Sr Maria Dee's home leave coincided with our planned trip to the Far East, we decided to add the Philippines to our itinerary.

Accordingly, we spent some time in the city of Iloilo, Sr Maria Dee's home city on the island of Panay, and several days in Antipolo, situated just outside the capital, Manila, as guests in

the Sisters' Provincial House. Sister Maria Dee introduced us to the life and work of her order, as well as introducing us to her lovely family who were clearly thrilled to see her and made us very welcome.

Among the many sites we visited was an enormous shopping mall containing many of the retail stores, cafes, and restaurants that you find worldwide. What marked it apart was the magnificent chapel situated next to the roof garden. Several of the Filipino shopping malls are owned by a Chinese couple who insist on this facility in each mall. No expense is spared, and they sponsor priests to celebrate daily mass.

Antipolo, the site of the Provincial House, is situated on a hill overlooking the city of Manila. It boasts an impressive cathedral and is a traditional place of pilgrimage dedicated to Our Lady. The convent itself is situated in beautiful grounds with well laid out gardens. There are 33 sisters in residence, including 9 novices. Sadly, in recent years they have seen a decline in vocations and their missionary work may be curtailed in the future.

The Provincial House has a beautiful chapel with screens to display readings, responses and hymns, a facility lacking in most UK churches. One cannot fail to be impressed by the high



standards in every aspect of the Sisters' life and work. Within the grounds of the Provincial House is a purpose built museum dating from 2004, to mark the centenary of the Sisters' work in the Philippines. It charts the history of the order from its origins in France where, between 1694 and 1710, Father Louis Chauvet Pastor of Levesville-la-Chenard set about training young women to be good teachers and to care for the poor. This community grew into the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres. In the 19th century it flourished not only in France but also spread to many parts of Asia, notably Hong Kong, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, and Korea and then in 1904 to the Philippines.

We visited the hospital in Iloilo where Sister Maria Dee ran the Social Services department for many years and met several of the sisters she worked with. In Manila we visited one of the High Schools run by the Sisters of St. Paul. Both were very impressive institutions. We took a trip to the far side of Manila where the Order run a Centre of Renewal, a retreat and training centre, which rivalled any of the conference centres I have attended in the UK. Wherever we went accompanied by Sister Maria Dee she was greeted warmly. People approached her to touch her forehead, a traditional sign of respect for religious.

The Philippines is a poor country and poverty breeds crime and violence. Armed guards are very much in evidence and

buildings, including the convent where we stayed, are protected by high fences and gates with security staff. The country has had a chequered past, under Spanish rule for many years, then run by the Americans and the Japanese. It is now a democracy but faces many challenges, not least its transport system. The roads in and around Manila are heavily congested. A journey of 40km across the city took 4 hours and we were assured that this was the norm. There is little public transport and very few footpaths. Elementary Education is very well established but not all children complete secondary education to 16. Higher and Further Education remain out of the reach of many, and foreign travel is a dream for most.

The Filipino people are warm and friendly. Their reputation for service in both hospitality and the caring professions is recognised worldwide. Poverty at home drives many of them abroad to seek better lives and to help support family members back home. Our two sisters are not escaping poverty, they have come to minister to us. Where once we sent missionaries to share our faith, they now come to support and enrich our faith communities.

We are blessed to have the service of our two sisters. They have left their home and their communities and a very rich spiritual life to serve ours.  
*Emma McGrath*

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## St John XXIII Preston Cluster Lenten Service

**S**t Joseph's church was the venue for our annual cluster Lenten service. St Augustine's Catholic Primary, St Ignatius's Catholic Primary, St Teresa's Catholic Primary, Christ the King Catholic High School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary all come together to sing, pray and watch.

During the service each school portrays the Way of the Cross with song, drama and readings from Jesus's glorious entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Trial and finally to the Crucifixion. The children were fantastic and led us through the service respectfully and as a worshipping community. It is an opportunity for the Parish and Schools to come together to celebrate the season of Lent. The schools value this service as an outward expression of and witness to our faith.

Pope Francis has said that *"Catholic education is also evangelization: bearing witness to the joy of the Gospel and its power to renew our communities and provide hope and strength in facing wisely the challenges of the present time."*

Our Lenten service, so well received by the parents, staff and pupils is living out the Pope's mission.

*Catherine Monaghan, Headteacher, St Joseph's RC Primary School*

*“They have Moses and the prophets and the scientists, they should listen to them.”*

# The Sign of the Times

**I**t is fascinating to wonder what Jesus might talk about in his parables if he was living in Cumbria or Lancashire today. Shepherds, perhaps, but probably not fig trees, or even less of wine presses. Would he be talking instead about the unjust greed of energy companies? Would he be using speeding, drink driving and road rage in a parable on selfishness?

The messages of the parables are eternal. They are not stuck in Jesus' time, although the stories are. We need to interpret them according to how we live today. We must read the signs of the times and live accordingly.

One of the most powerful parables about justice is about the rich man and Lazarus (*Luke 16, 19-31*). The rich man is condemned for his excess whilst Lazarus, covered in sores, starves outside his gate. In his torment the rich man begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers. Abraham replies *“They have Moses and the prophets, they should listen to them”*. A big part of the rich man's sin is indifference. The parable does not tell us whether it is intentional or not. Lazarus today is a poor farmer watching his crops being destroyed by drought or floods. She is a sweatshop worker producing cheap products to support the throwaway culture. Lazarus is a child who will inherit a world that has been relentlessly plundered. And the rich man? We don't have to look far....It is us.

We have feasted on the world's resources at the expense of the poor and at the expense of the other species which inhabit the planet. We have created and perpetuated a massive injustice against the poor through our own indifference. Perhaps Abraham would reply today *“They have Moses and the prophets and the scientists, they should listen to them. They should also read the signs of the times, the storms, the floods, the droughts, the rising sea levels, the deforestation and act accordingly”*.

If Jesus was preaching today to the holidaymakers on Blackpool sands or the walkers on Scafell Pike, he would probably be telling us that our

environmental and social problems have a common cause - that we have put ourselves before God. He might be outspoken about *“structural sin”* - the economic and political structures that make the rich richer and the poor poorer, where the rich man is a corporation or a system rather than an individual. He might speak out about what Pope Francis calls *“the globalisation of indifference”* where affluent people throughout the world potter on with their own lives ignoring the woes of others. He would almost certainly be accused of being *“political”* by the vested interests who are doing very nicely out of current economic and political systems and are VERY keen to maintain the status quo. That's what happens when you speak truth to selfish and institutionalised power. It's what Jesus' challenge to Pharisees' power that ultimately led to the crucifixion.

The signs of the times are that we cannot go on as we are. The most recent report on the climate makes for grim reading, the cynical greed of corporations and increasing competition for resources threaten the stability of the world. The widening gap between the rich and the poor is scandalous. We cannot just potter on with our own lives oblivious to the problems.

As Christians we have a secret weapon. It is Hope. It is something that is missing from secular debate. Hope challenges us to act - to respond to, rather than being indifferent to, the signs of the times. Pope Francis calls us to change our lifestyles so that we put God and our fellow creatures first. We will solve many of our problems if we simply live according to the two-thousand-year-old teachings of Jesus, which are still so relevant today.

If you want to share your environmental journey or are keen to make a start, but need help in getting going, please do contact us ([ldfjsue@gmail.com](mailto:ldfjsue@gmail.com)) as we would love to create a network of like-minded people and share wonderful work in Lancashire and Cumbria.

*Stephen Garsed (Environmental Justice Lead)  
Environmental Justice Group: Lancaster  
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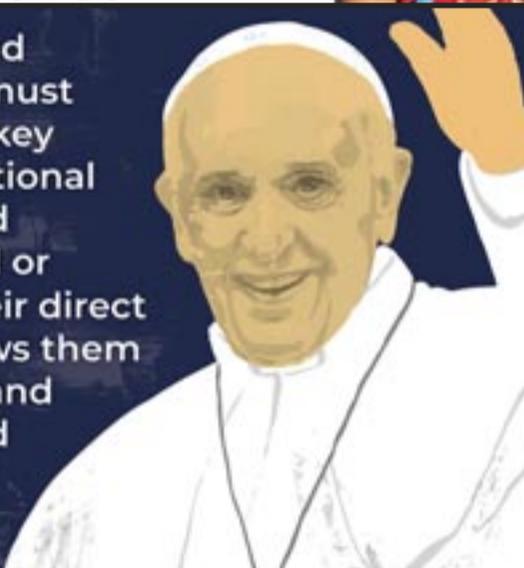
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“...small farmers and farming families must be considered as key actors. Their traditional knowledge should not be overlooked or ignored, while their direct participation allows them to better understand their priorities and real needs...”

Pope Francis



# You can help CAFOD to support farmers around the world in the fight to keep their rights to their own seeds

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The walk will take approximately 7 hours to cover up and 3 hours down with a distance of about 10 miles. The walk will be a good level of fitness to manage the walk up the hill.

Along the route there will be refreshments as well as prayer using the book.

Before the walk there will be a special Mass celebrated at St John the Evangelist Church, Newark, 12.00 PM on 14th July. The church will offer Bradburne's 'Letter from Thomas Bradburne' read out at 10.00 AM on 14th July. There will be a pre-walk Mass at 9.00 AM on 15th July.

To book your place and read your Bradburne prayer visit [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com) or call 01430 27518 or 01430 27519. All proceeds of this walk go towards supporting the people living in Malawi through the JBMS.

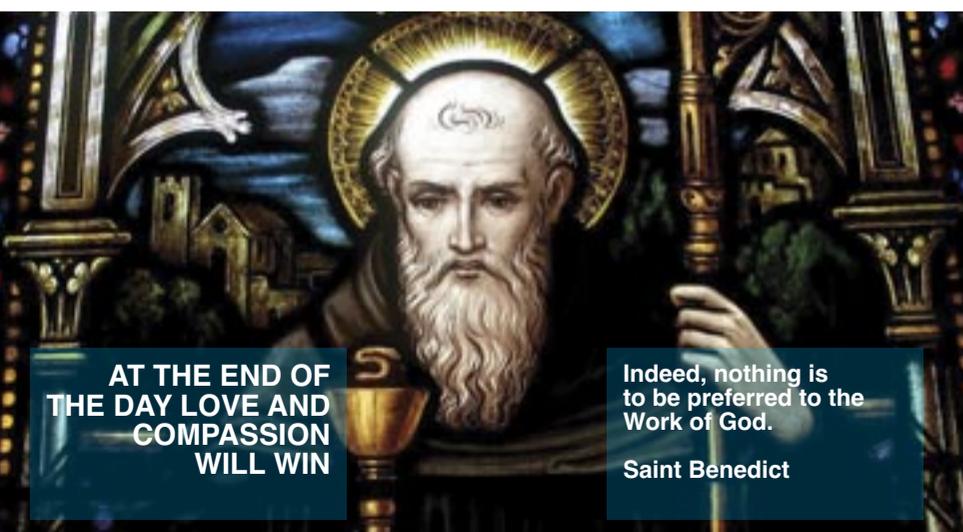
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Saint Benedict

As the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, CAFOD is reaching out to people living in poverty with practical help. But CAFOD's mission also calls on us to challenge the structures that bring about poverty and injustice in the first place.

This is at the core of the Fix the Food system campaign which was supported last year by parishes in each of the 22 dioceses in England and Wales.

This CAFOD initiative aims to re-think the current global food system and, as Pope Francis says, transform it for the benefit of people and planet.

Globally, just nine crops account for more than 65% of all crop production, which are traded and transported by a few big businesses.

This lack of crop diversity makes the current food system unfit to cope with the challenges brought about by the climate crisis and also makes it unsuitable for quickly adapting to disease and conflict.

We just need to look at Russia's war in Ukraine to see the impact this has had on the price of key staples such as wheat and overall food prices.

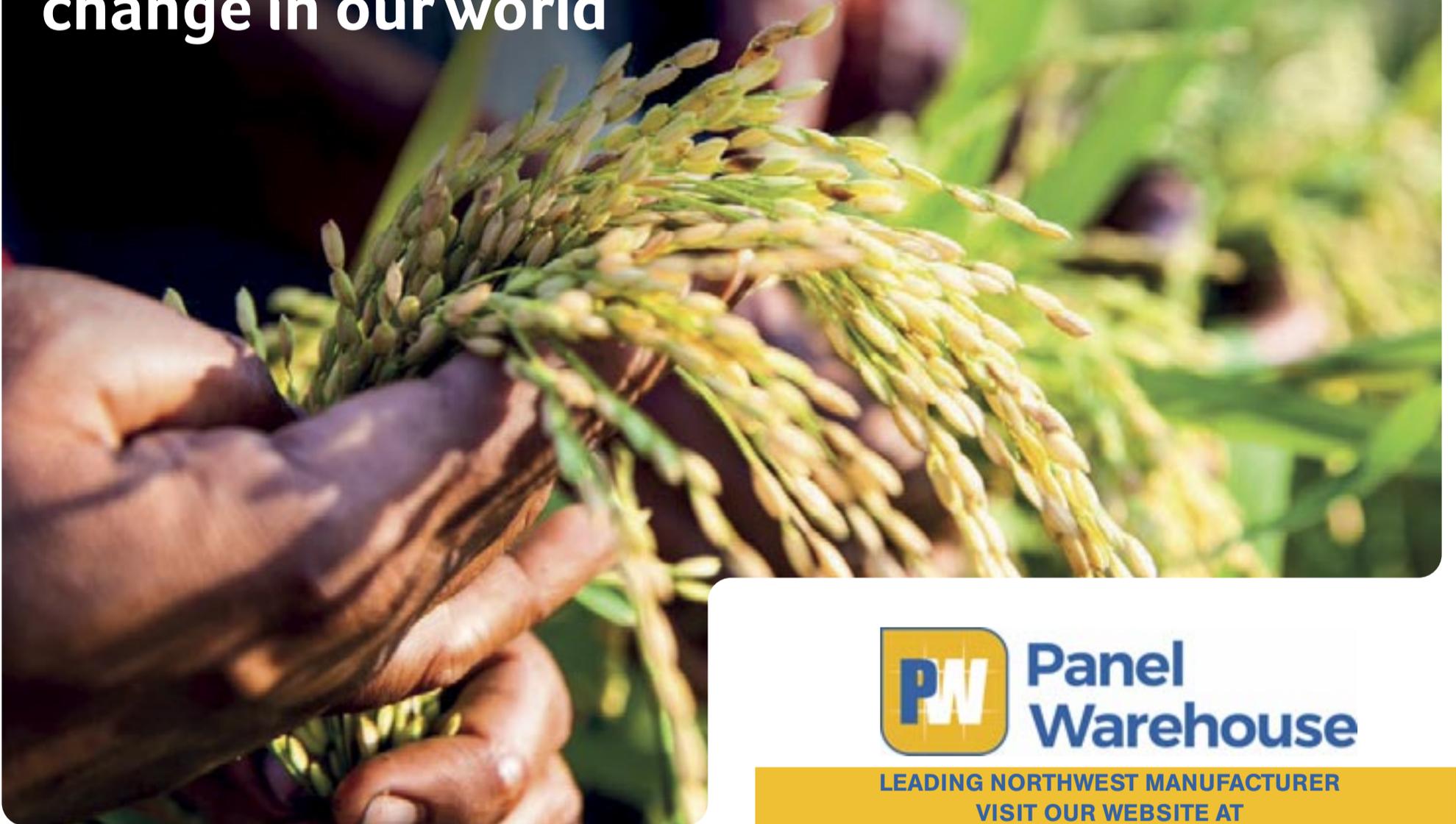
**Solidarity with small scale farmers**  
Although enough food is produced to feed everyone, around 800 million people go hungry each day and many of them are small scale-farmers who grow the world's food.

This situation is intensified when small-scale farmers are unable to freely access a wide variety of local seeds which they have used for generations. Instead of saving, producing, and sharing their own seeds, they are often pushed towards buying a limited selection of commercial seeds produced by a few corporations.

This is not good for the climate nor for food security. It's much better when small-scale farmers can build and freely access a diverse set of seeds. It increases local resilience.

Seeds are also a symbol of hope and transformation in our Catholic faith. This is why CAFOD is inviting parishioners

# Our faith-filled actions are also like seeds, bearing fruits of change in our world



all across the country to support Salina, a small-scale farmer and seed saver in Bangladesh.

**Without access to seeds, agriculture is not possible**

*"...what peasants, fisherman and farmers conserve in memory handed down through the generations and which is now derided and forgotten by a model of production that is entirely to the advantage of a limited group and a tiny portion of the world's population. Let us remember that it is a model which, despite all its science, allows around eight hundred million people to continue to go hungry..." – Pope Francis*

For generations, small-scale farmers have freely shared a wide variety of seeds to produce the food that feeds a significant proportion of the world's population. However, laws are being introduced across the world which limit what they can do with their own seed varieties.

As a result of these laws, small-scale farmers are facing increasing pressure to buy seeds from the limited selection produced by big corporations. But this is

not good for people or the planet.

CAFOD is inviting parishes across the country to stand in solidarity with small-scale farmers to ensure that they have free access to their own varieties of seeds.

Salina, a seed saver from Bangladesh says *"...The companies do not give good seeds. They put descriptions on their seed packets that are not true. It is very impractical information. And the main thing is, the seeds sold by the companies do not belong to the farmers. Farmers can grow the crops, but they cannot keep the seeds in their own hands. This is a very bad thing..."*

Salina has written a letter to the World Bank - an institution with a lot of influence in food policies - calling for the protection of the rights of small-scale farmers like herself to use their own varieties of seeds.

This summer, your parish has an opportunity to support Salina by adding your names to her letter. Find more about how your parish can support Salina at: [cafod.org.uk/food](http://cafod.org.uk/food)



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# Know Your Faith

## ***In what sense is the Blessed Virgin Mary the Mother of the Church?***

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of the Church in the order of grace because she gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God, the Head of the body which is the Church. When he was dying on the cross Jesus gave his mother to his disciple with the words, "Behold your mother" (John 19:27).

*Further reading: CCC 963-964, 973*

## ***How does the Virgin Mary help the Church?***

After the Ascension of her Son, the Virgin Mary aided the beginning of the Church with her prayers. Even after her Assumption into heaven, she continues to intercede for her children, to be a model of faith and charity for all, and to exercise over them a salutary influence deriving from the superabundant merits of Christ. The faithful see in Mary an image and an anticipation of the resurrection that awaits them and they invoke her as advocate, helper, benefactress and mediatrix.

*Further reading: CCC 965-970, 974-975*

## ***What kind of devotion is directed to the holy Virgin?***

It is a singular kind of devotion which differs essentially from the cult of adoration given only to the Most Holy Trinity. This special veneration directed to Mary finds particular expression in the liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and in Marian prayers such as the holy Rosary which is a compendium of the whole Gospel.

*Further reading: CCC 971*

## ***In what way is the Blessed Virgin Mary the eschatological icon of the Church?***

Looking upon Mary, who is completely holy and already glorified in body and soul, the Church contemplates in her what she herself is called to be on earth and what she will be in the homeland of heaven.

*Further reading: CCC 972*

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