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The Catholic  VOICE *of Lancaster*

The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster
Issue 320 + June '20

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Caring for Those who Care for Us



During their Easter break, a large team of people, including many staff members from St Bede's High School, Lytham, were busy producing PPE (protective, personal equipment) to support local NHS staff and people working in local care homes and the community.

Spearheaded by Clare James, Year Leader for Yr 8, and Craig Richman, Head of Computing - with fundraising led by Graham Warrington, Head of Music - the team has now provided huge numbers of protective face visors, face-mask extenders and scrubs bags for staff to place their uniforms in at the end of a shift and load directly into a washing machine to minimise the spread of the virus.

Deliveries have been made to Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Royal Preston Hospital, care homes across the Fylde Coast, health centres and Marie Curie Nurses. The demand is so high that 3D printers have been running all day and night and sewing machines have been racing through donated pillowcases to create the scrubs bags. The team is doing such tremendous work to support the NHS and care workers who are currently working tirelessly to care for our community.

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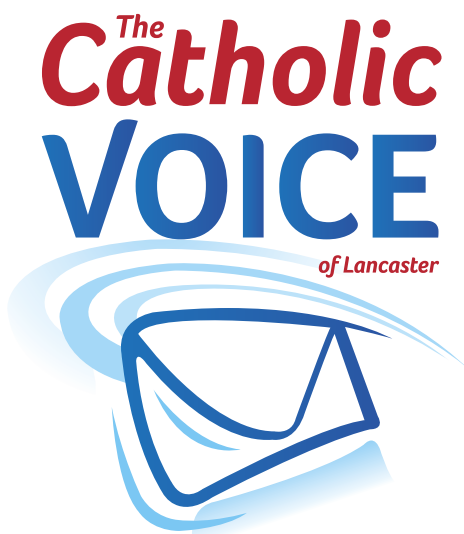
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EDITORIAL

As this editorial is drafted, a slight relaxation of coronavirus lockdown advice has been communicated by the Government with the caveat that stricter controls will be reintroduced should scientific evidence suggest that this is needed to control any upsurge in the spread of the virus.

We are a universal Church with the gathering for Mass central to our faith. Coming into the physical presence of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament has been denied to the faithful. Instead we are reliant on a virtual reality but despite the best efforts of parishes throughout the diocese a lot of our diocesan community are denied this as they do not have the technology or expertise to take advantage of all that is available: live Masses, devotions, ALPHA courses, First Communion programmes, prayer groups using zoom etc. Their personal prayers however are needed now as never before.

The earliest time that we can hope for a relaxation in the availability of our churches will be July and then it is highly likely that the most we can hope for is that our churches will be available for private visits and prayer. Public gatherings for worship could still be some time away and a lot of work will be needed to be undertaken to ensure that the personal safety of all is assured. The tone of the Government message of

describing the relaxation as baby steps suggests that there is still a long way to go. In June it is anticipated that our primary schools could be taking tentative steps to provide the younger members of our community with a months' education before the closure of schools for the summer break. We pray that all our teachers, staff and children keep safe during this difficult period. Please keep them all in your prayers.

As we gradually emerge from behind our front doors we need to appreciate that life is going to be far from normal. The world as we know it has changed, we will have changed and like a baby taking its first steps there will be a lot of faltering on the way. We need to be patient with ourselves, and those around us, we must carry forward that spirit of community that has clearly been evident over the past weeks.

When praying please remember, especially, Bishop Paul, who is recovering at home after suffering a damaged ear and fractured skull when he came off his bicycle earlier in the month and also Canon Paul Emberry who also fell off his bike and suffered damage to his wrist which required surgery, he too is now recovering at home

Our Lady of Lourdes Pray for them, St Cuthbert – Pray for them



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Life as a Parish Priest during Lockdown



We would love to hear of your experiences during this period of lockdown.

- How much has it changed your life?
- What are you doing differently?
- What have you found hard?
- What if anything have you enjoyed?
- How are you filling your time?
- What impact has it had on your, spiritual, emotional and physical health?
- What help and assistance have you received?
- How has home schooling been going?
- Have you taken advantage of the live streaming of Mass?
- How you helped your community?

Just a few ideas for you to ponder, you probably have more, including maybe, some funny stories.

No more than 250 words and please include your name and parish.

Please send to:
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 no later than 10 June

When the crisis started it felt like being left on the shore whilst the tide went out, disappearing beyond the horizon. First St Patrick's, our primary school in Cleator Moor, cancelled their feast day Mass, and a few days later St Joseph's, our primary school in Frizington, did the same. Shortly after, the churches closed and we were locked down. All the many things that make up parish life ceased.

It was not an idle time. Indeed every day felt like a week. New information came in thick and fast and had to be communicated to all the relevant people. There were frequent phone calls from those who had arranged baptisms and weddings rearranging dates. As secretarial and household staff stayed at home all their jobs were taken over by me (and I discovered the hard way that trying to iron a fitted sheet is really not to be attempted...!)

But central to everything was the worry of how to deal with the spiritual and pastoral needs of the parish. I have always felt that a day on which I hadn't entered a parishioner's house was rather below par. This had to be replaced: phone calls to those who had never missed Mass in their long lives to reassure them that they were not committing mortal sin; checking, particularly on those who live alone, that they were managing; linking up with those who were volunteering to help, and passing on names if any were struggling. We are lucky, we live in a close community and few people are abandoned by their friends and neighbours and our extraordinary ministers of the eucharistic are keeping a concerned contact with those they normally visit.

How to spiritually nourish those at home who especially needed at this time support and guidance from the Church? I knew our parish Facebook page allowed live broadcasting. So I tried it - saying that I would celebrate Mass 'live' the following Sunday. In a

modest sort of way it went viral getting thousands of views! It seemed novel at the time, but very quickly it was what a lot of ministers were doing. Sunday and weekday Mass still have many more 'attendees' than was usual before the lockdown. What is heartening is that very many older people, who never thought they would go anywhere near the internet, have learnt how to share in Mass this way.

Only a few of us in the Deanery are able, through our age and health, to visit hospital when we are called to the dying. At first we found it quite alarming - but we came away with a real appreciation of the work of those frontline workers - done with great affection and also humour. There have been more funerals - though perhaps not as many as fear had first suggested. Only having a few family members, and preparing with them by phone and email, means that funerals are lacking a lot of the healing dimension that more personal contact and the gathering of friends and neighbours brings. We have one great benefit here at Cleator - our Grotto. It was the suggestion of Paul Mills, parishioner and funeral director that we could do the first part of the service in the Grotto, before going to the grave. The families have deeply appreciated this - it has brought something special and lasting to their experience.

There are more aspects to life at present too numerous to mention (*Sharing prayer with ecumenical partners by Zoom; ringing a bell on Thursday evening as a hundred vehicles horns blaring drive past to show appreciation of key workers...*).

Life under lockdown has not been idle. It has called for imagination and ingenuity at times.

We are all waiting to gather again - with a renewed appreciation of what it is we have been missing - called together by the Lord to encounter Him in the Eucharist.

Fr Paul Johnstone, Cleator



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Easter Online



For many years we have welcomed young people to Castlerigg for the Easter weekend. This year it wasn't possible to get everyone together in person, but we moved our Easter Retreat online instead. At short notice, thirty young people signed up for the weekend and we gathered online using Zoom and YouTube.

This allowed us to come together and spend time with each other, getting to know each other better and catch-up with old friends, to pray together and learn more about the Easter celebrations.

We started each day, coming together on Zoom, with a time of prayer and a fun activity to break the ice. We had time to learn more about the Easter celebrations, and to get together in small groups to talk about our own experiences and what we had learnt.

The liturgies of the Easter Triduum were celebrated in the chapel at Castlerigg, live streamed on YouTube so that everyone could join in. Ewan, one of the young participants on the retreat, recorded most of the music for our celebrations and this was used in the liturgies, bringing us all together in song. On Holy Saturday afternoon we had great fun taking part in a team quiz together, and the retreat came to close on Easter Sunday with tea & coffee after Mass, on Zoom (*bring your own tea, coffee and biscuits!*).

There were challenges in offering this retreat online, but it was enjoyed by everyone who took part. The experience of spending Easter weekend with other young people, if only virtually, added to the celebration. We learnt more about Easter and valued spending time together as a community.



New Director

Hello. My name is Jack Regan and I'm very happy to say that I've just started as Director of Youth Services for the Diocese. If you've got a long memory you'll realise that it's not my first time working for this diocese, or indeed being based at Castlerigg. I worked here between 2002 and 2007 before heading down south for twelve years.

Anyway, I've been asked to write a few words to introduce myself, so strap in... I've been working in youth ministry now for twenty years. I've spent a lot of that in residential centres, but I've also worked in school chaplaincy, in diocesan and parish roles and in various other places. One of my best memories from the last twenty years was being part of the core team for the first two Flame events at Wembley Arena. I also started the *CatholicYouthWork.com* website which I sold back in 2014.

My last youth ministry post was as a Diocesan Youth Officer in the Southeast of England. We didn't have a team or a youth centre like we do here in Lancaster. It was just me and my car! My job was to support youth leaders round the diocese and to organise diocesan events.

I finished that last year when we decided as a family to move back to the Northwest. Despite being a southerner (*sort of*) I married a girl from Carlisle, and since it's much nicer up here (*it really is*) we decided to move 300 miles north to start a new life in Cumbria. We live in Wigton – a choice we made largely because we are part of the wonderful Cor et Lumen Christi Community.

Shortly before we moved up here I started my own training business – mostly

working with adults who work with children and young people. I delivered training in First Aid, safeguarding, Mental Health, and a few other bits and pieces. At that point, I thought I'd made the move out of youth ministry, but it seemed God had other plans, and so here I am sitting in the office at Castlerigg, once again, and ready to take on a very exciting challenge.

I have a very firm belief that it is possible to do youth ministry that keeps young people in the Church into adulthood. It's not easy, but it is possible. And I think that we have enough good people and enough resources in the diocese to make it happen here too. And so, my task is to build on the excellent work that is already being done, and to take it into the future. For me, everything starts with relationships: relationships between people, organisations, and our own relationships with God. If those things are strong, we have an excellent foundation to build on. After that, it's about providing quality experiences and processes for people so that they can explore their faith in a welcoming environment.

One thing I'm very much aware of is that it's hard to evangelise people in a short day retreat, and so another priority is going to be asking 'what's next?' for people once they leave Castlerigg?

Answering that question is going to mean a lot of time in schools, parishes, and other places around the diocese. Once the world starts working again and this craziness comes to an end, I'll look forward to meeting you all. Until then, please keep me and the youth service in your prayers.



Blessing Jars

During this Time of lock-down it is very easy to feel bored and tired, even though we may not have done anything much in the day. Personally I have been looking back to days when I could do all the fun and interesting things that I can't do now we're in lock-down. I find myself missing those days and it makes the reality of lock-down even harder.

However looking back on those days as a blessing, a gift from God, has made me appreciate them more, and improved my mood rather than bringing it down. This is summed up for me in the saying:

“Smile because it happened, don't cry because it's over.”

This has made me appreciate those memories and experiences more than I would ever have if I had just let myself forget about them.

I have spent an afternoon creating a Blessing Jar to store reminders of those memories in. I will keep this jar and when I am having a down day I can go to the jar and bring my mood up with a happy memory to remind me that things always change.

1. Firstly I started off by saving a jam jar from the recycling and decorating it.
2. You can decorate yours by using anything, magazine cut outs, drawing using sharpies, different coloured pieces of paper or even just printing off some pictures that make you smile. *(However decorating the jar isn't essential, it just made my jar more meaningful for me.)*
3. Then I proceeded to write *(you could draw them)* memories on different pieces of paper. Some of the memories from my gap year that made it onto the list were:
 - creating a den in the staff lounge at Castlerigg;
 - star gazing on the steps with others of the team;
 - completing a night hike with Alex and Fr John;
 - the Advent retreat and all the Easter retreats I've been to.
4. Finally I placed all these pieces of paper in the jar, ready to pull one out when needed.

Hopefully this will help you too. If you've got any questions on how to make your blessing jars, or just want to share what you've done, get in touch on social media @CastleriggManor. We look forward to hearing from you. *Chris, Castlerigg*

Gap Year

The Youth Service are currently recruiting volunteers for next year's gap-year team.

We are looking for young people (18+) who are excited about their faith and want to share it with others.

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My name is Julie Barton. I am a parishioner and catechist at St Mary of Furness, Ulverston, Cumbria. It is the parish where I grew up and the church I have attended for most of my life. I have recently been appointed High Sheriff of Cumbria and have in turn appointed my Parish Priest, Canon Paul Embery as my chaplain for my year in office. I think we may well be the first Catholic High Sheriff and Chaplain in Cumbria since the county was created in 1974.

My installation as High Sheriff took place earlier in March before the recent restrictions were in place but you will see from the photos that social distancing guidelines were followed. The photographs show me in my High Sheriff regalia, Canon Paul Embery, and my younger son, John.

The Office of High Sheriff has been around for over a thousand years and used to hold extensive powers. Today I am not able to collect taxes, judge cases in court or summon a posse as my predecessors could, but I still hope to play a positive and active role in Cumbria today. My challenge is made greater by the current restrictions of the COVID-19 crisis. So armed with a laptop rather than an ancient sword I hope to encourage, promote and thank those who are working so hard to support our communities at this current time. I aim to connect people, albeit it remotely in the short term and have been using social media and radio to share needs, information and heart-warming stories of those going above and beyond to help others. I have even been able to post on Facebook about livestreaming church services. Cumbria is a really large county so one positive consequence from the current church closures is that I can virtually attend different church services in distant parts of Cumbria all on the same day. Recently I dashed "virtually" from Carlisle to Workington for Mass. It is a privilege to come together in prayer with so many across our diocese and

across other denominations. It reinforces for me that we are all part of a big church family.

To find out more about my year in office, please visit www.highsheriffofcumbria.co.uk and <https://www.facebook.com/hscumbria2020/>

Regarding my installation as High Sheriff, I was originally meant to be installed in late March in a big ceremony to be attended by 200 people at Barrow-in-Furness Town Hall. This was cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis and instead I moved the date forward. I held a tiny event instead, outside on my garden patio in Ulverston. The Lord-Lieutenant, the Undersheriff, my elder son Joseph and a few others all attended virtually via Skype. All Skype guests were dressed in suits and Claire Hensman (*Lord-Lieutenant*) wore a lovely hat. I could see them all on the screen as I made my declaration. Marcia Reid Fotheringham (*outgoing High Sheriff*), Canon Paul Embery and Les Johnson (*a Justice of the Peace*) were actually present (*maintaining social distancing of course*).


Fr Paul brought the church lectern to add to the formality (*well he did ask if he could bring anything!!*). It was not the 200 people planned but it went well nonetheless. It was very special making my declaration from the lectern from the parish. Peter, my husband stood in and read a paper on behalf of Claire Hensman, Lord-Lieutenant and our younger son, John (*21 years old and back home from Durham University*) stood in and read the script in the place of the Undersheriff, Tim Cartmell.

My full diary of events that I should have been attending, like for everyone else, is all cancelled. Instead I am connecting virtually with so many groups and charities across Cumbria and I am so encouraged and impressed by so much kindness being shown by the people of Cumbria for their fellow Cumbrians.


Julie Barton

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Many parishes over the last few weeks, not knowing how to respond to the crisis, have shut up shop for several months, waiting till the situation returns to “normal”. While there may be a temptation to hibernate through this season, Divine Renovation UK has been hearing from parishes who have realised that more needs to be done to keep parishioners connected and reach out beyond the parish than ever before. We talked to Fr Philip Conner and Lisa Vallente-Osborne from St Joseph’s, Lancaster to hear about what they are doing...

Parishes seem to be in one of two states right now: either hibernation, or increased energy and reaching out. Why have you chosen the latter?

Fr Philip: From the very beginning we had a sense that we had to move fast and we had a sense that this COVID -19 crisis could go on for a very long time. Therefore there was a need to ensure in the first instance that no one in the parish felt abandoned by the Church, and secondly there was a need to re-orientate the whole parish towards a new missionary outlook, capable of both sustaining the parish and reaching out to the wider community, particularly those who were afraid and lost at this time.

What have you moved online, and what is the impact you’re seeing?

Lisa: Our main Facebook page is the central constant heartbeat of communal prayer: we mobilised daily Adoration, Mass and a 6pm thought for the day or Divine Mercy on livestream from early on. In addition, we have Facebook ministry sub-groups: a Children’s Corner (an interactive RE lesson based on the scripture of the day), a Prayer Corner (teaching about how to pray and the sharing of experiences), Liturgy of the Word group (bringing the Scripture of the day alive with Lectio Divina), a Music Ministry group (teaching people how to pray through music, both praise and worship, and more traditional). We also have an outreach service of Guardian Angels (an army of phone ‘befrienders’, phone ‘prayer buddies’ and physical errand runners with access to the food banks and our own Food Club).

The prayer angels also pray for the sick and parish intentions, with weekly Zoom prayer sessions (usually the Rosary). While it is challenging to sing together on Zoom, our choir are working on pieces individually, which a tech member then edits together on YouTube.

Normally, our weekend attendance at Mass is 150. We now have over 1,000 regular Facebook followers, and our



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Maundy Thursday Mass reached 15,000 people, while a normal weekday Mass reaches 2,500. We've had people join us from South America, China, South Africa, and India. We have made connections with Anglican and Orthodox churches too, with local Anglican churches joining us virtually for Easter.

Fr Philip: From initial panic and paralysis I am amazed at what has happened to the parish in such a short amount of time. We have been running Alpha courses for a couple of years now, but through this Covid crisis the whole parish has now taken onto itself the profile of Alpha: outward-looking, welcoming, hospitable, missionary. Before this whole Covid crisis blew up, I had been labouring as to how to express vision in the parish and how to speak of it more prophetically in the parish. To my amazement I see the parish witnessing to the vision which I had been unable to express! The numbers of leaders that have stepped up, the numbers of volunteers, the depth of prayer and faith sharing that is going on, has truly been a work of the Holy Spirit. One lady who is not of our parish and found us through the internet wrote to me these moving words: *'St Joseph's church and its family is certainly helping me to reflect on all that is good and needed and I feel alive, awake and spiritually inspired and moved. I think most of us were*

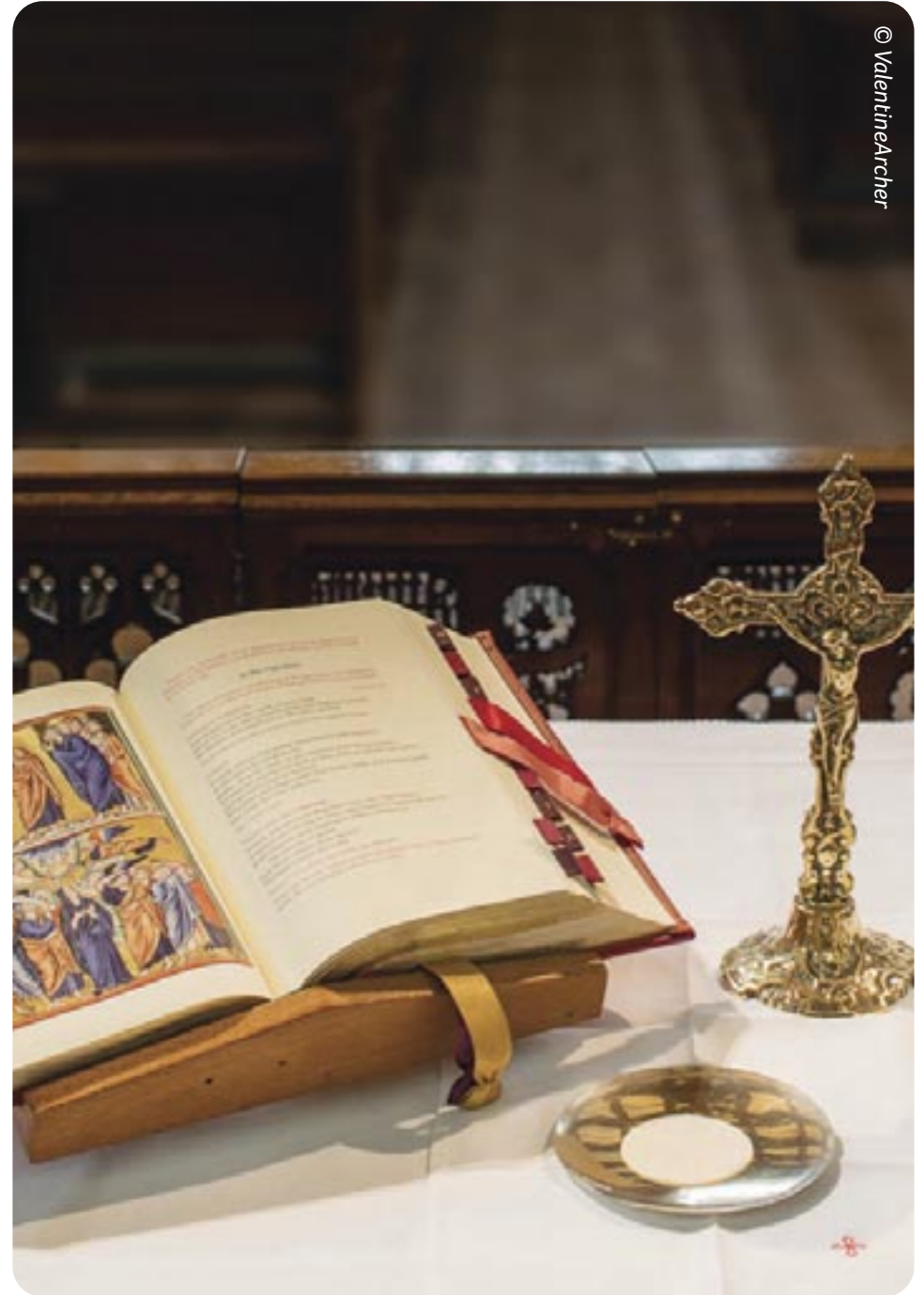
expecting a most barren of Easters, but, no, it has proved to be the most fruitful because of what your Church has lived out.'

In addition to moving all our ministries and services online and generating life through our Facebook Groups and Guardian Angel initiative, we have partnered with our Food Club and with the City Council and deal with direct referrals with those who need assistance or food. We are beginning to deal with people now who have had no prior connection to the Church but who, I hope, are finding a Church full of compassion and mercy.

How will your parish be changed once you are able to gather in person again? Will this have long-lasting impact?

Lisa: We will make arrangements to permanently stream Sunday Mass as our own housebound and sick have found this comforting and helpful. Our Facebook ministry groups will continue and we will probably develop more. The Holy Spirit has led us this far and will continue to! We have more active disciples and leaders within the parish, all with the same purpose... waking up others and making more disciples. Our sense of a faith-filled community has never been stronger!

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Pentecost Sunday

Pentecost Sunday

**Alleluia, Alleluia!
 Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of
 your faithful and kindle in them the
 fire of your love. Alleluia!**

A reading from the Holy Gospel
 according to John (20:19-23)

*In the evening of the first day of the
 week, the doors were closed in the
 room where the disciples were, for fear
 of the Jews.*

*Jesus came and stood among them. He
 said to them, "Peace be with you"*

*and showed them his hands and his
 side. The disciples were filled with joy
 when they saw the Lord, and he said
 to them again, "Peace be with you.
 As the Father sent me so am I
 sending you".*

*After saying this he breathed on them
 and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. For
 those whose sins you forgive, they
 are forgiven; for those whose sins you
 retain, they are retained".*

**The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

+++ HOMILY ++++++

"As the Father sent me, so I am sending you; receive the Holy Spirit"

On Thursday 21st May, we celebrated the Ascension of Jesus into heaven. In the First Reading that day, the angels asked the apostles why there were standing there looking into the sky. The implication is that there is work that needs doing. Whilst we contemplated the wonder of the Ascension, we perhaps also found ourselves a bit like the disciples, asking what do we do now, especially in these difficult times.

Well the answer to that comes today on this feast of Pentecost when, under the power of the Holy Spirit, those remaining disciples found themselves emboldened to go out and proclaim the Gospel. Although they had experienced the Risen Lord, they had still been afraid to go out for fear that they would suffer as Jesus did. Their self-imposed quarantine in the Upper Room was not forty days, but fifty days.

Those disciples are no longer simply hearers of the Word, but its heralds. We should not forget that when Jesus had his disciples working alongside him in his ministry as he preached and healed, they were not merely his assistants or lackeys, but were being prepared by Jesus as his workers for the mission ahead.

If we look throughout the totality of Scripture, we see a common theme occurs regarding those whom God calls to become sharers in his work. This common theme is a feeling of inadequacy. The prophet Jeremiah objects to the Lord's call saying, "I am only a child". We learn that many, including Mary were afraid, initially at least, of what God was asking of them.

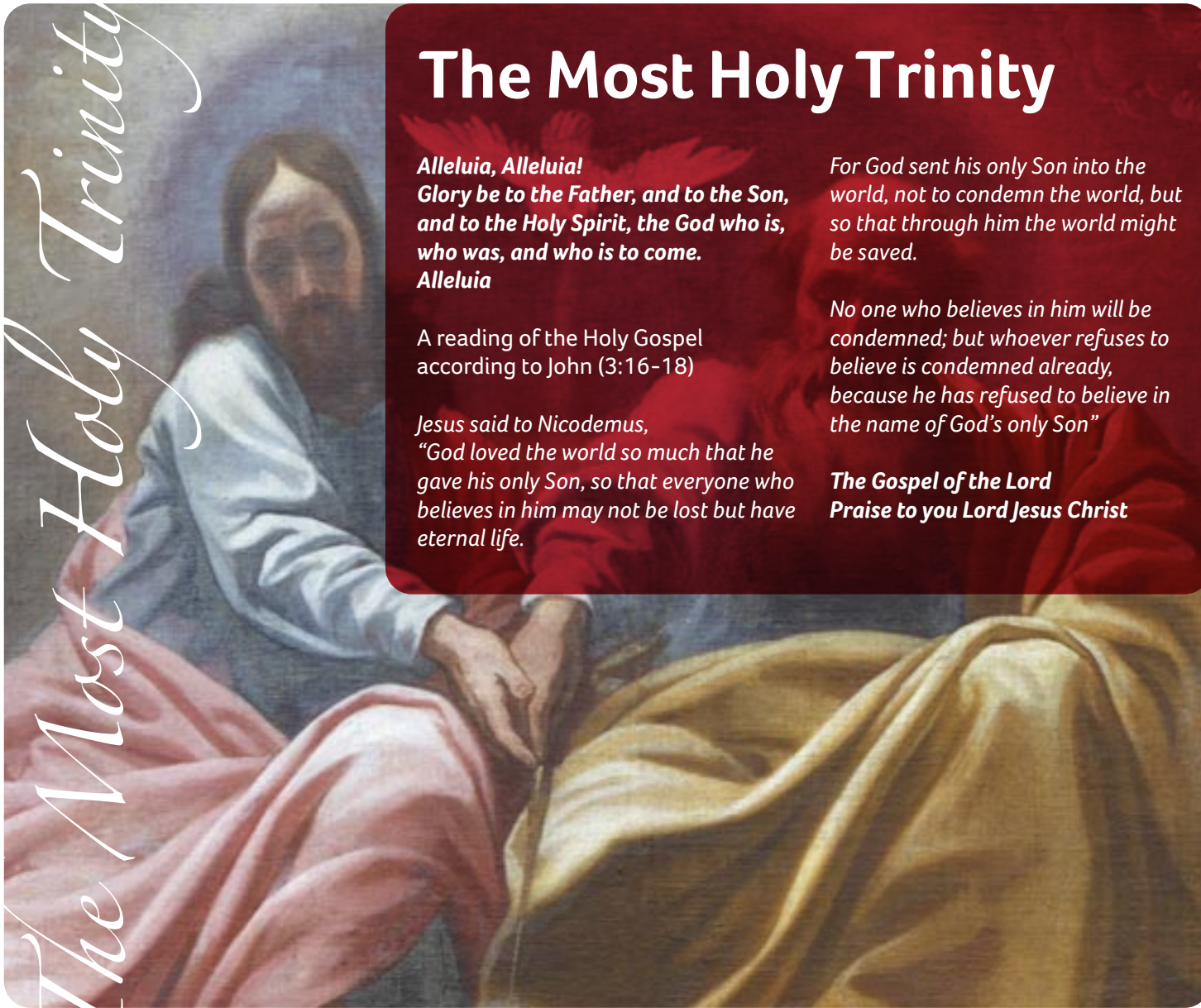
If we look at these stories honestly however, we see that people assumed that God is calling them to do his work by their own efforts only. No wonder they would feel inadequate. If anything, today's feast teaches us that when God calls us to do his work he does so in the knowledge that, yes, we are weak, but that he can help us through the power of his Holy Spirit. Seen in this light,

we can say that the protestations of those who object to the call of God in their lives are indeed quite self-centred, almost demonstrating a lack of faith and trust in the God who speaks. I remember reading the online blog of a priest. Writing in hope for the coming feast of Pentecost, he said that for our Church communities to be credible "people need to be able to see in us a community of reasonable and sensible people who actually believe in this person called Jesus Christ and his resurrection. A community which is not obsessed with itself, but puts itself at the service of humanity; a community in which people pull together; a community which has fire in its belly and which doesn't mind rattling the bars of other people's cages. It needs to be a community that clearly possesses a treasure, a hidden treasure that makes its members happy. When others can look at us and say that about us they also may want to say 'this is the community to which I wish to belong.'"

Do we recognise ourselves in this description? Maybe, until Pentecost, the disciples wouldn't have recognised themselves in it either. The reality is that often we can all become a bit too comfortable where we are and lose enthusiasm or become fearful. We need to allow ourselves to be prodded, tested, and yes, moved by the Holy Spirit. That calls for an openness of heart on our part, otherwise we will become like those in the scriptures to whom I have already referred – afraid to say "yes" because we feel inadequate and think that God is asking impossible things of us, things that we have to do only by our own efforts.

There is within Pentecost a call to open the windows of our hearts to the life and energy of the Holy Spirit, and to let that same Spirit blow through them and see what happens. Perhaps, so often, we only partially open the windows to let a small draught in; and as we know a draught never does anyone much good. Are we brave enough to fling the windows wide-open?

Canon Paul Embery VG, Ulverston



The Most Holy Trinity

Alleluia, Alleluia!
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, the God who is,
who was, and who is to come.
Alleluia

A reading of the Holy Gospel according to John (3:16-18)

Jesus said to Nicodemus,
 "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but have eternal life.

For God sent his only Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.

No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son"

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

+++ HOMILY ++++++

“God sent his Son so that through him the world might be saved”

Has anyone ever said to you, “What’s wrong with you? You look half dead.” If they have, it was probably the morning after the night before. Your sparkle has gone. You look hung over. You don’t want any breakfast. The music’s too loud on the radio, and you feel awful. Hopefully it doesn’t happen too often.

Unfortunately, some people look like they’re permanently hung over, not that they are drunk or anything, but because the worries of the world have simply overwhelmed them, to such an extent that they can no longer laugh. They have an air of despondency and often a low opinion of themselves. A priest friend describes another of our friends by saying, “Show him the light at the end of the tunnel, and he’ll soon put it out!”

There may be many reasons why someone could feel that way. He could be in a dead end job, or constantly passed over for promotion. It could be that he feels that after many years of trying he has never found true happiness, and wonders what is the point of it all? Well, if you’ve ever felt like that, or if you are feeling like it now, today’s feast of the Blessed Trinity is for you, because it gives us a lift and helps us to grasp something of our true worth.

Although we cannot understand the mystery of how three persons can be one God, we are certainly aware of what it means to us. For example, we often talk of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which means we think of him as the air that we breathe. We can’t see air, we can’t grasp it, but we know it’s there by the effect it has on us. The effect of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is to give us the courage and strength to do things we never thought possible.

In the book of Genesis we are reminded that we were made in the image and likeness of God. This means that there must be something of God’s goodness, truth, beauty and love reflected in us. However, Genesis doesn’t really talk about a personal relationship with God, except as creature to Creator. It’s only when Jesus comes that we see where we fit into the picture and what our true relationship with God is. We are taught to call God our Father.

Jesus showed us the true face of God, and revealed something of his inner life, which we could never have guessed in a million years. He taught us that at the heart of God there is a community of three persons. God is a relational being, sharing life and love, in a constant giving and receiving between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the best bit is that he showed us how we are invited into an intimate relationship with the Trinity. Through Baptism, we are inserted into the very life of God. God’s life and love flow through us and enable us to be his eyes and ears, feet and hands reaching out to others in his name.

So, when Jesus says “If anyone loves me, my father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home in him,” he is offering to take hold of our lives, our worries, our guilt and low esteem, and reveal to us the real beauty of who we are in the sight of God. Perhaps, we have forgotten that God understands the human condition: that’s why Jesus was sent to redeem it. Our Father never forgets that we are a chip off the old block - “Listen to me all you who seek the Lord - remember the rock from which you were hewn” (Isaiah 51.1) - made to live with him in eternal happiness. He believes in us, and that good news should make us always more alive than half dead.

If it doesn’t, then to become more aware of the truth of what I’m saying, you need to take time out to retire into the solitude of your inner self. There is a part within us which only God can reach. But you have to let him in.

Find somewhere quiet, put yourself into his presence, preferably in front of the Blessed Sacrament, but if that’s not possible, in the silence of your heart. Just be still, and let your prayer be reflection on occasions in the past when God has touched your life.

If you manage to do that regularly, you will become aware that he is still touching your life. You will feel his presence in so much of what you do. Most especially, you’ll become more aware of his life within you. For those still struggling, you will come to know how much you are loved and treasured by him which, hopefully, will give you the power to live life to the full again.

Canon Alf Hayes, Fleetwood


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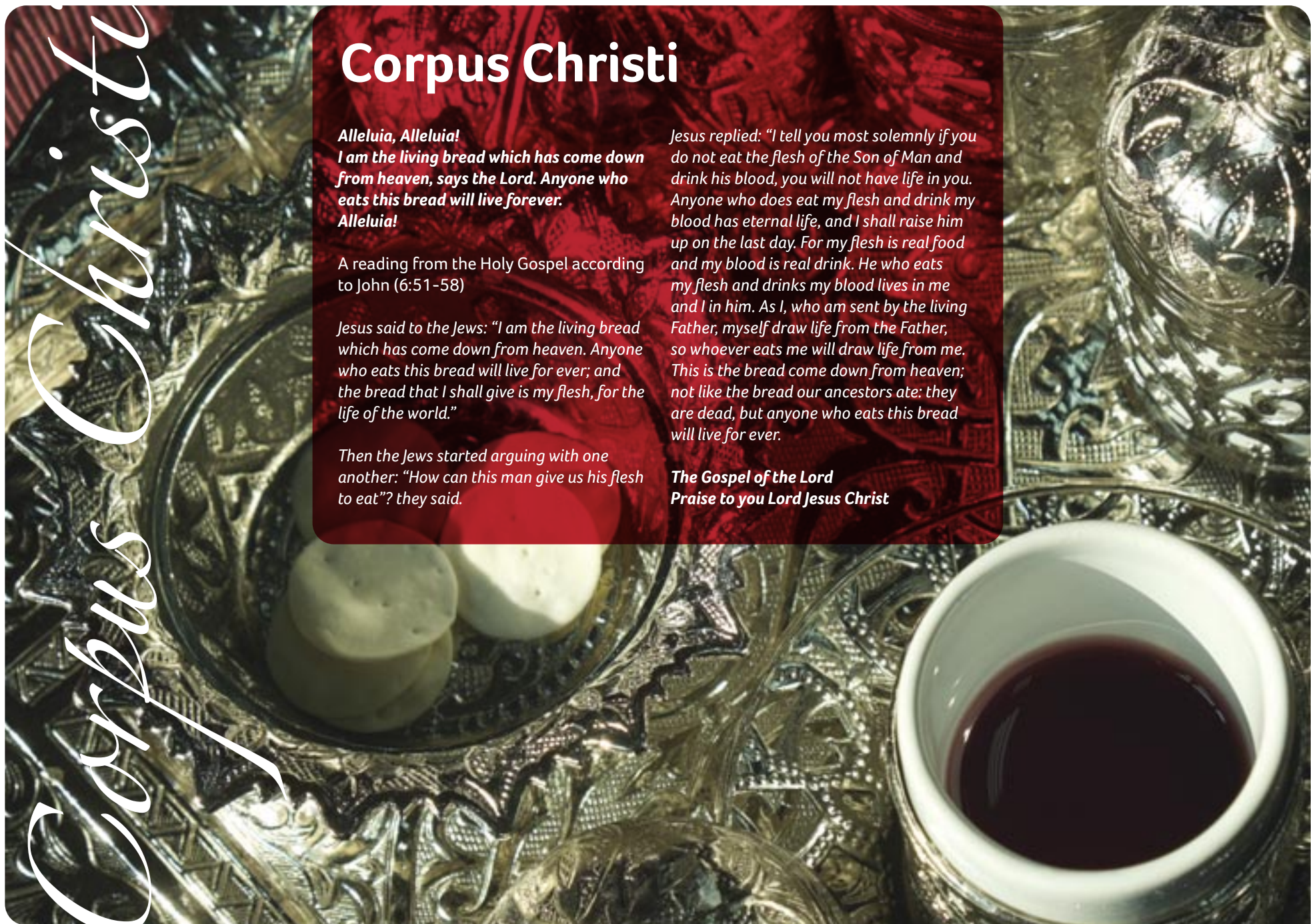
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Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi

Alleluia, Alleluia!
I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever.
Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (6:51-58)

Jesus said to the Jews: "I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

Then the Jews started arguing with one another: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they said.

Jesus replied: "I tell you most solemnly if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I in him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

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+++ HOMILY ++++++

“My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink”

For the first time in living memory most members of the Church have been unable to receive Holy Communion.

It is important to say ‘living memory’ - because frequent reception of Communion is relatively new. When I first came here to St Mary’s over 30 years ago, there were still people (*mainly men*) who would always go to Mass but go up for the Sacrament only at Christmas and Easter. Many of the older Eucharistic hymns that we sing spring from this time. What they reveal is an intense love for Our Lord in Communion, emotional and rich. And also a sense that the veil between this world and heaven has been revealed to be very thin. *‘Beloved Lord in heaven above, there Jesus thou awaits me, to gaze on thee with changeless love, yes, thus I hope, thus shall it be: for how can he*

deny me heaven who here on earth himself hath given’.

Our fast from the Eucharist, caused by the coronavirus pandemic, has one advantage. It gives us chance to think, all over again, what receiving our Risen Lord under the form of bread and wine really means for us. All too easily it can simply become part of the routine of Mass going. The old piety had such a strong personal element to it. Ours needs to also. We spend more time now listening to the scriptures and reflecting on them. It is Jesus who taught, who challenged, who healed, who gave entirely of himself whom we receive when we go to Communion. This Jesus is the food of life and the gate of heaven for us as individuals, as parishes, as Church. Let us never take Him for granted again.

Fr. Paul Johnstone VF, Cleator

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time



12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Alleluia, Alleluia!
The Word was made flesh and lived among us; to all who accept him he gave power to become children of God. Alleluia!

A reading of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (1: 26 -33)

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: "Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the house-tops.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him

rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise be to you Lord Jesus Christ

+++ HOMILY ++++++

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body"

Anyone who knows me well enough will also know that I have an interest in genealogy. I have been tracing our family tree for 5 years now and it has grown to quite a size: over 3800 at the last count!

It is easy to forget whole branches and I often come across people I forgot I had included. Most of the members of the tree I know very little about. Let's face it, how much do we really know about even close members of our families? Near or far, God knows them all. He knows everything about them, every hair, every cell, every molecule – the tiniest part of

all of us he created and sustains in being from one moment to the next. Nothing escapes God.

The psalmist tells us "He knows of what we are made, he remembers that we are dust" (Ps 102). Knowing this, God has provided what is needed to raise us from the dust: "The gift considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift" (Rom 5:15).

We have recently celebrated Good

Friday when Christ died for us; Easter Sunday when that victory was revealed; Ascension when He returned to heaven to plead for us at the Father's right hand; Pentecost when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the Church; and Corpus Christi, the celebration of His Body and Blood, the Sacrifice made present for us at every Mass. There is more than enough grace to get us all to heaven. But are we willing to engage with it? Jesus says to His apostles, "What you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops." Our faith is like a lion, a lion who roars like the God who roars, as we have been telling our children. We must let it out and let

it roar. Jesus also tells His apostles, "Do not be afraid". He will not abandon us to those who threaten us. As Jeremiah says, "The Lord is at my side, a mighty hero" (Jer. 20:11). How can we fail? Not at all if we rely on our Lord: "How much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Lk 11:13). Reflect on the words of the Our Father: it's a program for taking up God's call. All this and heaven too. If we turn away from it, if like the man with one talent, we bury it in fear, then we bury our chance of heaven. And we all know where that will leave us. Don't bury the word. Let it out, and let it roar!

Fr. David Burns VF, Ansdell



Pentecost Sunday

May 31st – National Rosary Rally 9am to 9pm
England, Wales, Scotland

Pope Francis is encouraging Catholics to pray the Rosary in their family homes during the month of May, especially when the Pandemic is making us aware of the value of our families and making it possible for us to pray together in lockdown at home. He encourages simple Rosaries and joining online Rosary initiatives to pray to Our Lady for deliverance from Covid-19 and he has composed two prayers for this intention. I invite you to join in an initiative that follows on the Pope's request, the Pentecost Sunday National Rosary Rally, from 9.00am to 9.00pm across Scotland England and Wales. Our Diocese has been asked to pray a Rosary Hour at pm and I warmly invite you to take part.

Timetable for across the Dioceses

- 9.00am** Arundel & Brighton, Northampton and HM Forces
- 10.00am** Birmingham, Nottingham & Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy
- 11.00am** Brentwood & Plymouth
- 12 Noon** Cardiff, Portsmouth & Dunkeld
- 1.00pm** Clifton, Salford & St. Andrews & Edinburgh
- 2.00pm** East Anglia, Shrewsbury, Aberdeen
- 3.00pm** Hallam, Southwark, Glasgow

- 4.00pm** Hexham & Newcastle, Wrexham, Ordinariate OLV
- 5.00pm** Lancaster, Westminster, Argyll & the Isles
- 6.00pm** Leeds, Polish Catholic Mission & Glasgow
- 7.00pm** Liverpool, Middlesbrough & Motherwell
- 8.00pm** Menevia, Galloway, Paisley & Syro Malabar Eparchy
- 9.00pm** Rosary Rally will end with a final online Rosary & Blessing from Bishop John Keenan at St. Mirin's Cathedral in Paisley.

This is to be led in the form of a Rosary relay Rally where the Dioceses designated in their Rosary Hour encourage the peoples across their Diocese to pray the Rosary either, individually, in families, as online prayer groups, parish groups, and where possible led online by their parish priests and Bishop. It does not matter what time during the specified hour that the Rosary is prayed. Then on the hour the next Dioceses take up the Rosary relay Rally and so on until 9pm. At 9pm the Rosary Rally will end with a Rosary being led by Bishop John Keenan from St. Mirin's Cathedral in Paisley.

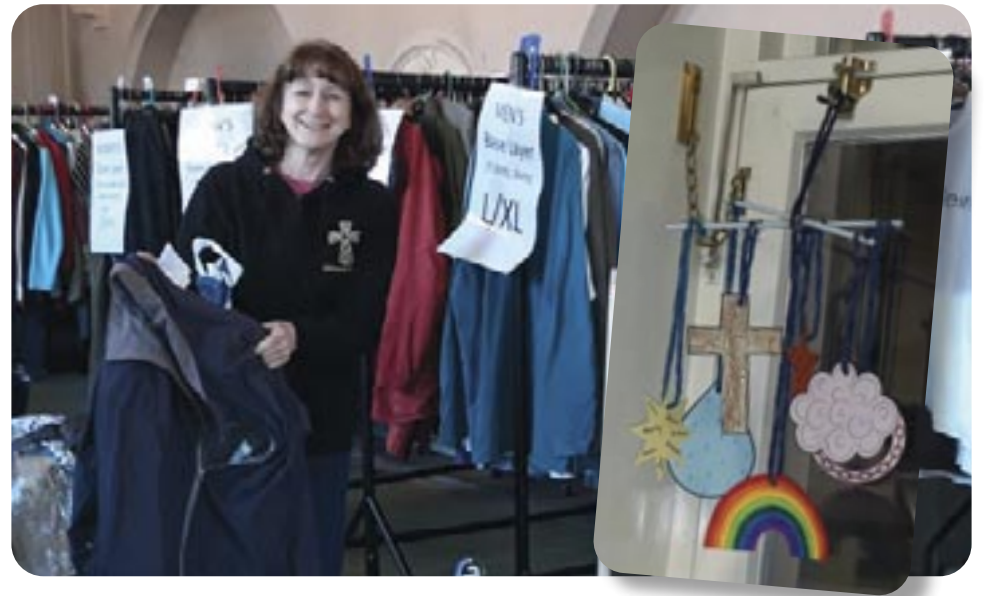
Come Holy Spirit & Renew the Face of the Earth
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Metanoia Reaches Out in Lockdown



As it has for everyone, this lockdown for the Coronavirus pandemic has caused the team at Metanoia Project to pause and rethink how to continue under very different circumstances. On average, we have around 150-200 people of all ages involved in our groups and events each week and we didn't want to abandon them just because we could no longer meet in our usual ways.

All the young people who regularly attend our youth groups have been sent an age-appropriate pack through the post – a big surprise for some of them who would never think to communicate through such traditional methods! For the youngest age group (8-11 years) we included Stations of the Cross for children and a craft to make their own paper palm leaves for Holy Week. There was also another craft to make a mobile with each of the symbols attached helping the young people think and pray about what is going on for them during this time. For the older young people of high school age and above we included interactive Stations of the Cross and issued them with 2 challenges to help them keep their faith forefront during the lockdown. We made a silly video on our YouTube channel to help with this. Above all we want the young people to know that God is in control and cares about them even in the midst of the struggle and to let them know we are praying for them and their families during this time and that we look forward to seeing them all again soon.

For smaller children and young families there have been several facebook posts of crafts, baking and prayer ideas to help celebrate the feasts and seasons and even a Facebook live video of how to make a time capsule as a family to remember and pray for this time. For adults we have created a Gospel reflection group on facebook encouraging people to pray with the daily Gospel and share their reflections with others. On Sundays we also provide a more detailed reflection to accompany the Gospel and encourage a deeper study of the text. If you would like to join the group, you can find it on Facebook by searching for Metanoia Project 'The God Who Speaks' Scripture Reflection Group. Another way we are helping people to pray is through music. We have recorded some psalms and hymns which have been used by some of the local churches during their liturgies. A few weeks ago, Ruth was also asked to lead an hour of Praise and Worship on facebook live for Catholic Charismatic Renewal England

which has been widely viewed and shared around the UK and beyond. This video has now been saved to our YouTube channel where you will also find the other psalms, hymns and videos too: <https://www.youtube.com/user/metanoiapreston>

We have continued with our weekly drop-in for the Homeless. With social distancing measures in place we have been able to continue to provide a cup of tea and the usual clothes, as well as check in to see how people are coping. With other organisations struggling to maintain their services during this time, we have also picked up another evening to provide food for this same group. Whilst much has been done to provide accommodation for rough sleepers during the pandemic, there are those who for many reasons are unable to engage with that help, there are also others who may have a roof over their heads but are struggling in so many other ways due to the effects of lockdown. The people who attend these two evening drop-ins have expressed such gratitude that the Church is here for them during this time of extra need when so many other places are closed.

We are also keeping in touch with our Volunteers and Young Leaders through social media. They are such a vital part of Metanoia Project and usually so involved with the day-to-day running of our groups and events so we have been missing them dearly. We are extremely grateful to the small team who have been able to continue to help us with the Homeless Drop-Ins and also for the others who have had to stay away for health reasons but have continued to offer encouragement – we know it has been a real challenge for many of them!

As well as all of these practical actions, we have been taking advantage of this time for much more prayer and planning for the future to ensure that Metanoia Project is the best that it can be and most importantly is following God's call as closely as possible. As a small independent charity, we rely on God's provision to enable us to help build His Kingdom here in Preston and He never lets us down. We have so much more that we want to do to reach people with the Good News and support the Church so are praying for the resources, financial and otherwise, to make that happen. We are also praying for a renewed zeal and confidence to move forward with all of what God has asked us – your prayers would be greatly appreciated!

The Metanoia Project, Preston

During the time of lockdown, while the Coronavirus pandemic rages on, I found that although it was lovely to maintain contact with family and friends, there was actually little to converse about due to 'the nature of the beast'. My husband had a long telephone call with his brother and when I asked him afterwards what they had spoken about he said something along the lines of, "Oh well, you know, Coronavirus and all that..." When asked if there was any other conversational gambit, he was hard pressed to bring anything to mind! And this was hardly surprising, because in a world where the social stratosphere had crashed, life has become mainly a case of eat, sleep and work. And for the older, retired generation, simply eat and sleep! Or had it...?

Challenging

Like many of us, I've found these to be really challenging times as I transitioned from a busy fulfilled lifestyle to one with very little content. Of course, I realise that I am incredibly lucky to have the companionship of my husband and a nice place to live, but that hasn't prevented me from missing all the hustle and bustle of what had gone before. And so, I have decided to keep busy... Naturally, there were the usual chores to be done; housework and the like, but I was definitely on the lookout for more interesting ways to spend the time and these I thought I would share with you:

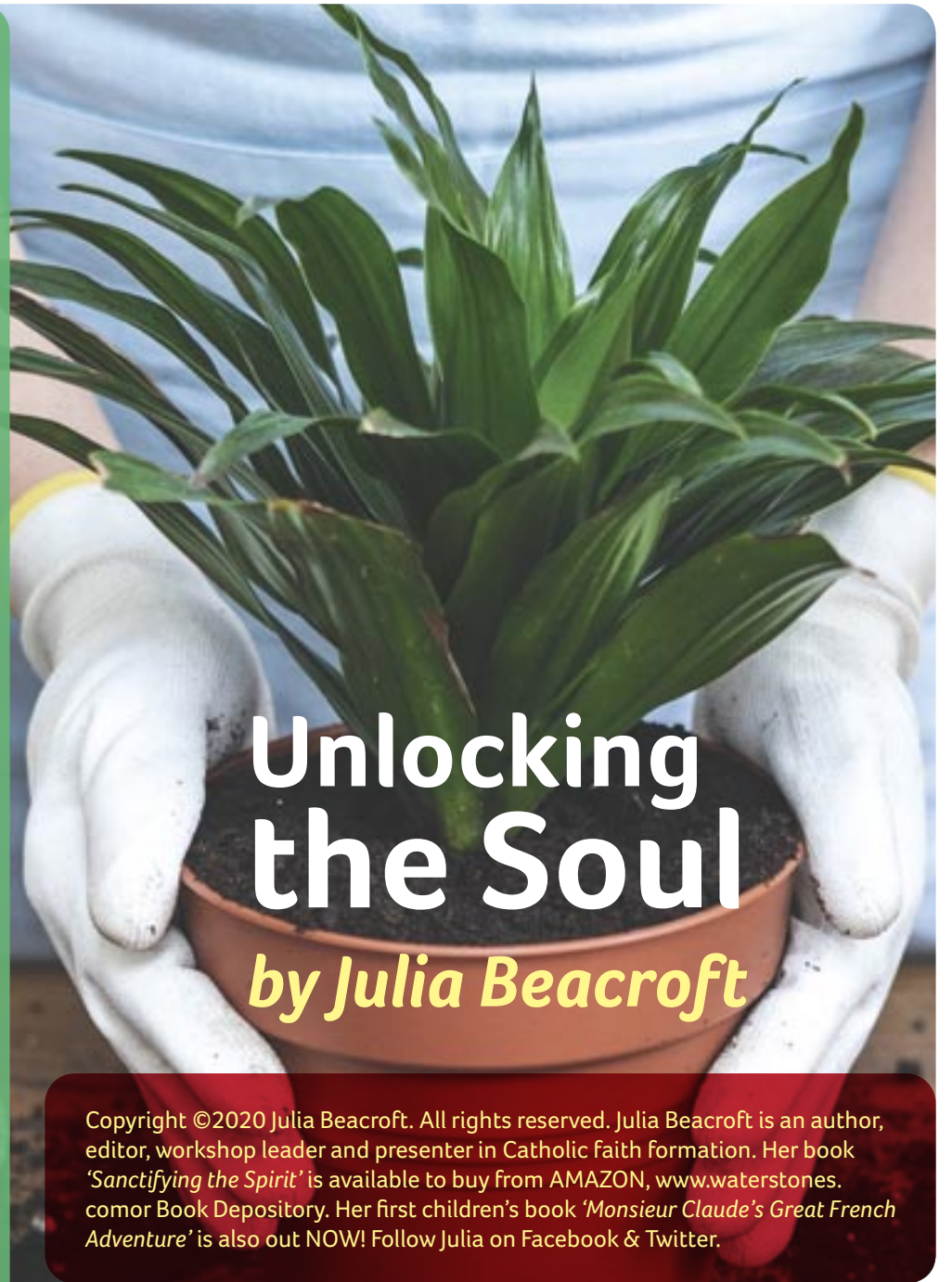
- Weather permitting, I tidied up the garden (low maintenance anyway). I re-potted plants which needed it and washed all the outside of said pots. I give some of them a coat of varnish and got really creative with one or two, painting designs on them and then giving them a sealing of varnish to complete.
- I recovered my sun lounger with a (nearly) new throw which I already had.
- Crafting – I took a plain wooden tissue box and gave it the 'bling treatment' using buttons, sequins, glue and silver paint which I already had.
- I went through my tops and tee-shirts making alterations. Some were too long, some needed sleeves shortening etc.
- I made two cotton dressing gowns for the summer with material I already had in my box. One was an unused duvet cover that I had bought but decided was unsuitable for the bedroom colour scheme!
- Skyped friends and family
- Made a point of telephoning one or two people who were alone and/or vulnerable for a chat at times
- Repotted some house plants which were desperately in need of it!
- Decorated a couple of rooms – with my husband. We had bought the paint some time ago.
- Cleared the tray in my office of all outstanding paperwork – bills, receipts, notes from leadership sessions etc. All sorted and filed!
- Wrote this article
- Read lots of books
- Re-organised my bookshelves (*which I've been meaning to do since we moved house over a year ago!*)
- Went for walks
- Did the church laundry. Mass is still being celebrated daily so there were the usual items to be washed and ironed. Social distancing observed of course!
- Painted a piece of furniture
- Tried lots of new recipes

There are probably even more things I could mention but the list gives you a flavour of how I have spent some of my time.

Clearly connected to God

For those of you who are familiar with my usual monthly articles, you may be somewhat surprised by the nature of this one. Where's the content about God, you may be asking yourselves, at this point? Well, I don't like to disappoint my readers but more importantly, the list that I have just supplied is very clearly connected to God and I'm going to explain why. It's incredibly simple actually; all the activities on the list such as repotting plants and tidying the garden brought me into close contact with nature and in so doing this brought me into close contact with the Creator, with God, the other activities which involved making, altering, using technology and crafting made use of the gifts and talents that were freely given to me by the good Lord. I do believe that we should make full and proper use of those gifts and talents. In common with many other people I wasn't keen on being in lockdown. But I'm alive and my time has been well occupied thanks to the goodness of the Lord. And to conclude - a lovely quote...

'Not everything is cancelled ... sunshine is not cancelled, spring is not cancelled, love is not cancelled, relationships are not cancelled, reading is not cancelled, naps are not cancelled, devotion is not cancelled, music is not cancelled, dancing is not cancelled, imagination is not cancelled, kindness is not cancelled, conversations are not cancelled, hope is not cancelled.'



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Out of the Blue Reflecting on Laudato Si



Out of the blue, most of the world has been invited on retreat. We have been forced to ponder our mortality, our vulnerability, our weakness, our ignorance. We have been prompted to repent of the collective thoughtlessness of our modern way of life and its side-effects. We have had to slow down, to abandon our ordinary routines, to wean ourselves from the addictions of 'business as usual'. Our values have been overturned; care workers, fruit pickers, parcel packers and cleaners have become our new saints, while go-getters, celebrities and billionaires kick their feet in their own homes.

We have rediscovered our neighbours, and even our own families. We have shared our fears and anxieties; we have grieved together, even at a distance,

for the wonderful individual human beings we have lost. We have publicly honoured courage, fidelity, and simple acts of kindness. We have learnt to value statesmanlike modesty, honesty and truthfulness over political bluster.

The religious among us have been praying more intensely, with more focus, than for decades, despite the disruption of our normal supports.

And many, many others, who do not normally pray, have begun to join us, without embarrassment. We know that we cannot do this by ourselves.

And we have all been in this together; rich and poor, famous and unknown, old and young, strong and weak, from every corner of the globe, together, we have

shared fear, anxiety, sorrow, compassion and love.

In our own country, at least, we have been blessed with a backdrop of a glorious springtime filled with the birdsong we could hear, flowers we had time to notice and birds and animals that grew in confidence when we withdrew.

"Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise?" wrote Pope Francis five years ago in Laudato Si'. Suddenly, the noise has stopped, and we have a chance to listen.

Let us listen to the sounds of nature, let us listen to the tradition of our faith, and let us listen once again to the Holy Father's appeal. Rereading Laudato Si' would not be a bad place to start.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty.

*Praise be to you!
Amen.*

Sr. Margaret Atkins

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