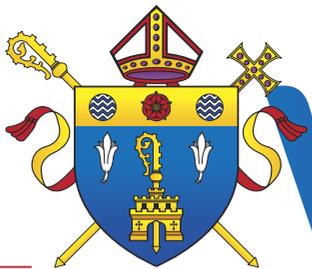


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The Catholic



VOICE

of Lancaster

The Official Newspaper to the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 336 + February '22

INSIDE: p05 Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2022  
p12 A New Year's Resolution you can keep!



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# New Year

## New Year

### Same Old or a Fresh Beginning?

**There is lots to look forward to:**

- The Synodal Process 'Vision of Missionary Communion Orientated to Evangelisation' gets well underway in our parishes and schools, please do your best to get involved
- There are opportunities in Catholic Education, Marriage Relationship Counselling and Prison Visiting all of which are covered in this edition
- Our Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes returns in July, it will be slightly different to previous years but nonetheless a great return to our calendar of events, read more inside
- In the autumn the relics of Saint Bernadette will be brought to England and be welcomed in every Cathedral. Specific dates have yet to be given as to when we will welcome Saint Bernadette's relics to Lancaster so watch this space

**As well as all these exiting events we must not forget to keep focused on:**

- Our prayer life, a real must to sustain all our efforts
- Restoring and renewing our Parishes from the effects of the global pandemic
- Playing our part to curb climate change
- Supporting the poor and marginalised in whatever way we can and promoting peace

*Peace demands concrete actions. It is built by being attentive to the least, by promoting justice, with the courage to forgive, thus extinguishing the fire of hatred*

Pope Francis

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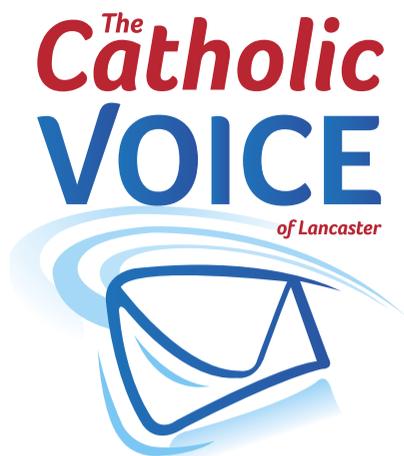
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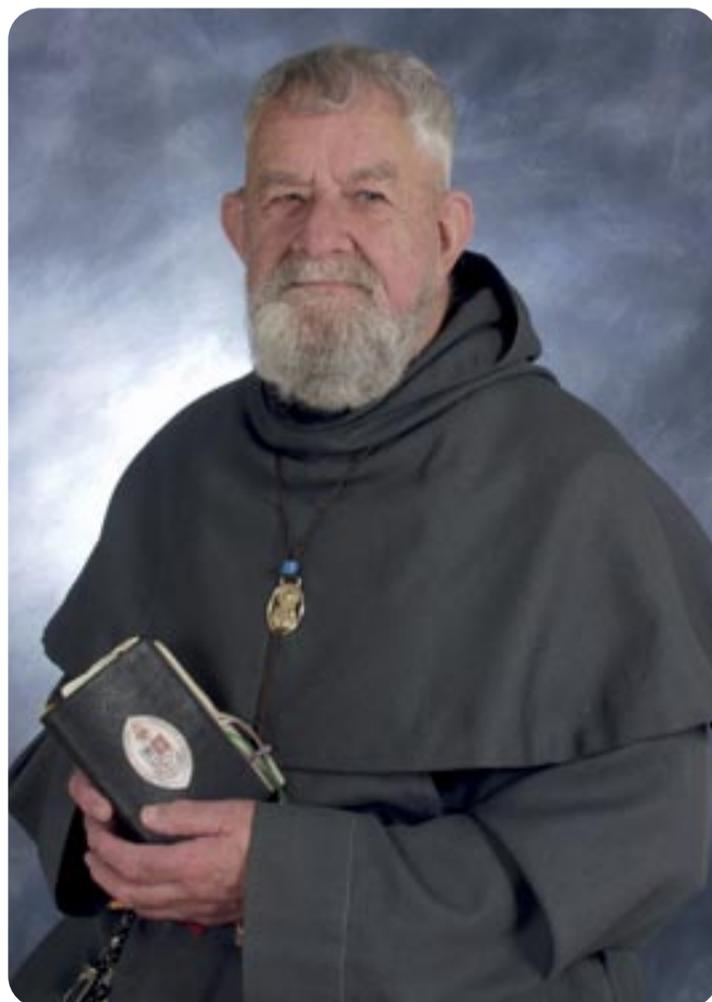
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# A cut above!



It's an easy thing for most people, a trip to the barbers to get your hair or beard trimmed to make you feel good, or if you've an upcoming special occasion. Not so for elderly housebound Franciscan Friar Brother John De Montalt from South Shore, Blackpool, who celebrated his 89th birthday last November.

John's carer, Kevin wanted to do something nice and so asked his barber Allan if he could help.

Allan from Alanya Turkish Barbers on Vicarage Lane in Blackpool said, "Kevin told me about John and how he was bed-bound and it was my pleasure to be able to visit, meet and help John.

For well over 20 years John could be seen walking the streets of Blackpool and St Anne's searching for people to support including those less fortunate; the homeless, those with mental health and those on the "margins" of Society.

Kevin added, I've known him for almost 20 years and he's always been helping people. He spent almost 40 years working for our beloved NHS as a nurse and Podiatry Specialist.

John who returned home from Residential care in June was so pleased that Allan could visit and in his own way said a personal thank you.

John took his vows to become a third order Franciscan Friar in the 1990's following the life of St Francis, spending much of his time offering pastoral care and support to many people. He also took on to live a simpler life in Obedience to his Catholic faith. The order was formed in 1221. *Kevin Lonergan, Blackpool*

LANCASTER DIOCESE FAITH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION

# Fantasy Schooling: Imagining Laudato Si in practice



Sister Margaret of Boarbank hall has produced a wonderful document called 'Fantasy Schooling: Imagining Laudato Si in practice,' whereby schools submit a document outlining their dream 'Laudato Si' school of the future. Although we are in the very early stages of developing this project it is hoped that at some stage we can work with schools to produce their own aspirational 'Fantasy School' whereby ideas can eventually be achieved in practice.

The Ecological Conversion Platform Journey to 2030 (parish guide to Laudato Si) has now been sent to all parishes within the Diocese. It is a fabulous resource and a great way to get started!

Churches Together in Lancashire are launching the Ecumenical Working Party (EWP) for Social Justice/Responsibility. Over the next few weeks the process of rethinking how this forum can best support and share practice, learning and opportunities for local church engagement in this area of work will be undertaken.

The Anti Slavery event in Preston raised awareness about modern day slavery (#SeeITShareIt) and encouraged us to look out for signs of possible victims of slavery. If you suspect it may be happening or want more information about modern

slavery, please contact Lancashire Victim Services by calling 0300 323 0085 or by visiting [www.lancashirevictimservices.org](http://www.lancashirevictimservices.org)

Catholic schools in Blackpool took part in the Eyes of the World campaign by bringing artwork and reflections they had been doing in schools relating to the current climate crisis.

Declan and Shawn, our Diocese's Step Into the Gap volunteers, who attended COP26 as part of the CIDSE delegation, opened the event with a talk. They will be sharing their experiences and reflections with us and outlining the impact COP 26 had on young people as a whole.

Pupils from St Mary's Catholic Academy were also interviewed and their statements can be viewed on the link below: [www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43146](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43146)

The Lancaster District Food Poverty Alliance networking group highlighted the need for a 'cash first' approach to food and security by promoting a Worrying About Money? Leaflet. The is also information relating to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants with no recourse to public funds. Please email the Independent Food Aid Network [lfanuk.org/cashfirst](http://lfanuk.org/cashfirst) for free copies.

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## Reduce

## Reuse

## Recycle

Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the YCW Impact Action Group which is facilitated by Terry Mattinson our Youth Worker has established a recycling scheme across the whole school. Ava in Year 7 came up with the idea and firstly she presented her idea to the rest of the Group and with the support of the Head Girl, Isabelle they presented the group's proposal to headteacher Mr Marsden. Mr Marsden gave his backing to the scheme.

The scheme is simple, it means every room in school has a reused cardboard box, so that we can all put our wastepaper and cardboard in. Twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday) recycling reps from every form and year group empty the boxes into the recycling bins. It has been such

a great success that instead of sending huge amounts of used paper and cardboard to landfill, the overwhelming majority now gets recycled. Many opportunities to recycle in the past have been missed but our young people are filled with a sense of hope; they can't change the past but they can impact the future.

In just the first two weeks of the project the pupils and staff filled 16 wheelie bins with paper and cardboard. The project has also made us all in the school community think about how much paper we use and this is hopefully making us think about trying to reduce our paper usage, which in turn should over time mean that we then have less paper and cardboard wastage. It is also making us think about our plastic usage and

wastage; currently very little plastic is recycled – in 2022 the pupils of the YCW Impact Action Group want to encourage the school community to significantly reduce its plastic usage and wastage and where it is used they want to campaign for the ability to be able to recycle it.

Our young people want to make the world a better place, not just for them but also for future generations. Pope Francis reminds us all that each and every one of us have our role to play in being good stewards of God's creation because Creation is a project of love given by God to humanity:

*'In some ways, the current pandemic has led us to rediscover simpler and sustainable lifestyles. The crisis, in a sense, has given*

*us a chance to develop new ways of living. Already we can see how the earth can recover if we allow it to rest: the air becomes cleaner, the waters clearer, and animals have returned to many places from where they had previously disappeared. The pandemic has brought us to a crossroads. We must use this decisive moment to end our superfluous and destructive goals and activities, and to cultivate values, connections and activities that are life-giving. We must examine our habits of energy usage, consumption, transportation, and diet. We must eliminate the superfluous and destructive aspects of our economies, and nurture life-giving ways to trade, produce, and transport goods.'*

We all have our part to play.

*Mr J Harding, Teacher of RE,  
Saint Bede's Catholic High School*

# Charity Benefits from Cold Dips

Two nurses from St Peter's Lytham, Pia Ashton and Anne Aitken created a real splash in November.

By taking early morning dips in freezing cold water throughout the month of November they really caught the imagination and raised well over £20,000 for cancer research.

Their swimming locations included Fairhaven Lake, the pond in Lowther Gardens in Lytham, the Ribble Estuary, the Dub in Wrea Green and a cattle trough on a local farm. The challenge required them to stay submerged for at least 30 seconds – no mean feat!

A tremendous achievement!



# Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2022 - An Act of Faith



**L**inda Wisdom, Director of Operations provides us with details of this year's Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. There are a number of very important changes to arrangements in previous years so please read the following information very carefully.

#### When is the Pilgrimage?

We depart from Manchester airport to Lourdes on Friday 22nd July and return on Friday 29th July. There are many challenges within the planning process and there is little doubt that the pilgrimage will be different to other years. However, we will thoroughly plan the pilgrimage in order to make it a safe and enjoyable time and leave us spiritually renewed.

We will continue to be guided by the government and our Chief Nurse. We should bear in mind however that planning is time sensitive, it is based on the restrictions and situation at that moment in time. Therefore, preparations laid will be regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with merging data and guidance from both the UK and France. Things will likely need to change along the way.

#### Some changes for 2022

The Booking Forms will be more comprehensive than in previous years because we will all have requirements to meet in order that we may travel, currently this includes the need to be fully vaccinated and we have decided this should include youth volunteers. Additionally, a comprehensive booking form is needed so that the Chief Nurse can examine individual applications.

Unfortunately, this year it will not be possible to take pilgrims to Lourdes that need personal/nursing assistance from the Medical Team. This is because the Medical Team will be on-call to serve the wider needs of pilgrims. Those that need personal care can still apply to come to Lourdes if they have the support of relatives or friends who are able to look after them during the week. We will still provide the usual wheelchair assistance service. Pilgrims who require wheelchair assistance will only be accepted provisionally until 1st May 2022 – which is the deadline for all bookings. This will allow us to work

**F**ollowing two years when it was not possible to travel to Lourdes, we have decided that this year gives an opportunity to re-establish the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Our Lady's Shrine. It will be an expression of our living Faith, and I do hope that many of you will be encouraged to accompany me.

Caution and prudence will play their part, but the overwhelming element will be our Faith. The Pilgrimage will be an expression of our confident trust that Our Blessed Lady is close to her children, keeping us safe, and drawing us closer to her Beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Pilgrimage will be an Act of Faith and generous trust on our part. It will be guided by the Holy Spirit, and will serve the Church in Lancaster, inspiring confidence in a time when many are tempted to retreat into themselves, tempted to stay at home, tempted even to doubt that our lives can ever be the same again.

I am particularly moved to make this Pilgrimage this year because in the autumn the relics of Saint Bernadette will be brought to England and be welcomed in every Cathedral. Specific

dates have yet to be given as to when we will welcome Saint Bernadette's relics to Lancaster. It is fitting that a good number from the Diocese will first have made a Pilgrimage to the Grotto at Lourdes and have prayed in that place so dear to Saint Bernadette. We know that her mystical experience at the Grotto changed her life.

Our time spent in procession and prayer there will be an experience of personal blessing and bring a great blessing to so many others unable to travel abroad.

I pray that this news will plant a seed of Faith in your hearts, and that you will respond with enthusiasm and generosity.

May it be an experience of Grace for each of you, and bring new heart to those for whom you pray. I also ask you now to keep this endeavour in your prayers as this new year is still just beginning.

May it serve to change the pervading atmosphere of fear and anxiety into a time of encouragement and hope.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.  
Saint Bernadette, pray for us.  
*With my blessing,*  
+Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster

out our pilgrim and volunteer numbers, so that we can ensure an adequate assisted pilgrim to helper ratio is retained. For this reason, no bookings will be accepted after May 1st 2022.

Overland travel comes with an increased risk and so, with this in mind, it has been agreed that there will be no youth coach or independent coach this year, all pilgrims will travel on the diocesan chartered flight. One of the many advantages of travelling together is that there will be the support of the Medical Team on hand.

The Tour Operator used for the 2022 pilgrimage will be Joe Walsh Tours operated with Northern Star Travel (Atol Protected 11313). It will be mandatory this year for all pilgrims to take out the Travel Insurance offered by the Tour Operator. This will provide pilgrimage organisers with certainty that pilgrims have full comprehensive cover inclusive of Covid-19 related claims.

#### You may be asking 'how safe is it to go to Lourdes?'

The Sanctuary in Lourdes along with the hotels, bars and shops have put in place extensive measures to mitigate the risk associated with Covid-19 community spread. Covid-19 cases in Lourdes and the surrounding area are reportedly very low, and the area has the highest vaccination up-take levels in France (96%). The Diocesan Hotels we will be using this year are the Hotel Eliseo, Hotel St George & Hotel Agena. To book please contact: 0161 820 8790 or via the website [www.joewalshstours.co.uk](http://www.joewalshstours.co.uk)

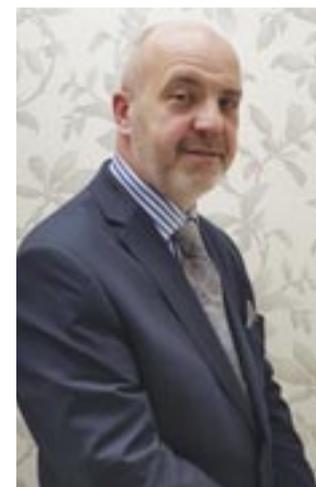
#### The Pilgrimage Theme for 2022

*"Go and tell the priests to build a chapel here and that people should come in procession"*

During the 3rd apparition, Bernadette had received and accepted an invitation from the lady: "Would you do me the honour of coming here for fifteen days?" And now during this, the 13th apparition, this personal, intimate although demanding dialogue, which was full of politeness, tenderness and affection, was opened up to the whole Church, to the whole of humanity. Bernadette had just received, for the first time in her life, a mission that concerned other people: *continued on next page >*

**David Pope** dip FD MBIFD

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"Go and tell the priests to build a chapel here and that people should come in procession".

**Calling all Lourdes Helpers**

The need for helpers is greater this year as we must ensure we have plenty of support for pilgrims. Anyone who'd like to work as an adult volunteer in any of our teams please contact Nikki Wisdom [chiefnurse@lancasterlourdes.co.uk](mailto:chiefnurse@lancasterlourdes.co.uk)

**Youth Team**

If you are 16 years or older please consider coming on pilgrimage this year. We need you! Information will be available soon: [www.castlerigg.co.uk](http://www.castlerigg.co.uk)

Posters and further information will be sent out to all parishes very soon.

**After 2 years of this global pandemic, which has brought much suffering and sadness, let us respond to our Blessed Mother and St Bernadette's mission to all humanity and go to Lourdes in procession!**

**Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us. St Bernadette, pray for us.**

# Your Letters

Send us your letters:

Write to: **The Editor, 99, Commonsidge, Ansdell, Lytham St. Annes, FY8 4DJ.**

Email to: [voicelatters@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:voicelatters@hotmail.co.uk)

- Please keep your letters concise (max 300 words)
- Include your full name and address
- Letters should not include any personal criticism or attacks
- The editor reserves the right to:
  - Amend or shorten letters or to refuse to publish them (no correspondence to discuss decisions taken will be entered into)
  - Publish a response if deemed appropriate

Your Letters

## 'Exodus'

Dear Editor,

At a local park in Manila, I saw a piece of the Berlin wall; a gift from the German government. One side is covered with colorful graffiti, the other still the original bland grey: metaphors to the two ideologies that it separated.

It put me in mind of a story from the cold war days of a daring escape from East Germany to the West. A family worked for months gathering materials and making a hot air balloon out of cloth, filled with hot air using cooking gas cylinders mounted on a cage which would carry them from a field (a few miles east of Berlin) in the dead of night to freedom. On the 2nd attempt they were successful; evading capture by the Stasi or secret Police by only a few minutes.

What also struck me though, was whilst most people behind the iron curtain were unhappy with their captivity and longed for freedom, only a small proportion tried to escape, they accepted captivity rather than risking all for freedom.

Childhood Sacramental programs end with Confirmation and then there is often little direction towards Spiritual growth in our church. No wonder so many men are taken captive by sin, addictions or boredom.

Most ancient cultures brought their men to maturity through training of the body, mind and Spirit through a process of initiation and fellowship. Like the Spartan 'agoge' prepared young men to become warriors, we need to fill this gap or the souls of our men will become flabby, weak, desensitized and deadened.

Earlier this year I embarked on a journey, a 90 day spiritual exercise, developed by the church in America, called Exodus 90. It includes prayer, scripture, moderate ascetic practices, and ideally fellowship with a group of like-minded men within the parish.

These components are not pharisaical rules and obligations for their own sake but rather tools God uses to deliver, strengthen and equip us for a new life with Him. A new life in the Freedom of the Spirit is both available and wonderful; but you will have to fight for it.

Yours Sincerely  
Stephen Clark, Malta (received via e mail)

+++++

Dear Editor

Let us pray that the cause of John Bradburne progresses quickly. However, the question 'John Bradburne, Cumbria's second Saint?' (Catholic Voice November page 15) must be answered with a No!

Cumbria already has at least two, St John Boste, Martyr, from Dufton and St Herbert who lived on an island on Derwentwater. I think we can also claim St Bega, an Irish woman by origin, who lived as a hermit at St Bees (a corruption of her name) for many years before fleeing to Northumberland to evade the Vikings.

Cumbria also has nine beatified Martyrs – Blesseds John Mason, Thomas Summers, James Duckett, Thomas Tunstall OSB, William Ward, John Duckett, Thomas Pickering OSB, Christopher Robinson and Thomas Sprott. We should also note that five of the Beatified Martyrs came from the area which now makes up the Parish of Holy Trinity and St George in Kendal. Is five Beatified Martyrs from one parish a record?

So, John Bradburne will not be short of a bit of Cumbrian company in the Mansions of the Blest.

Sincerely  
Fr Peter Groody, Egremont

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# Praying for those who have died

**D**uring November, the children and staff at The Cathedral Catholic Primary School remembered and prayed for those who have died.

They created their 'Tree of Remembrance' where the names of those who have died have been written on leaves and decorated by the children. Families sent in names of loved ones who have died so they could be added to our 'Remembrance

bowl' and we could pray for them in school.

Finally, Father Chapple led the children in a liturgy of prayer in our parish cemetery which adjoins the playground. The children prepared prayers to remember those who have died in our families, our community, our city and world. It is wonderful to remember and hope that those who have gone before us now pray for us, as we do for them.



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# New Year – New You!

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a Passionist priest and Postulator for the Causes of Dominic Barberi and Fr. Ignatius Spencer  
This is a preached retreat for Religious. The retreat will start on Sunday 20 March at 6:00pm and finish during the morning of Saturday 26 March.

20 to 26 March, Suggested donation, £470

### On a Journey with the Northern Saints, led by the Minsteracres team

Spend a week at Minsteracres journeying in the footsteps of the Northern Saints such as Aidan, Cuthbert, Oswald, Hilde and Bede. Find out more about their spirituality and motivation, and visit the iconic places where they lived out their faith. Includes visits to Holy Island, Bamburgh, Durham Cathedral and Heavenfield and other early monastic sites. All travel costs are included.

25 to 29 April, Suggested donation: £500

### Christian life in a new world: meditations on discipleship drawn from the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles led by Fr Donald Senior CP

The experiences of the past three years—the pandemic, the effects of climate change, raging political and social conflicts—have brought profound change to our world. It is time Pope Francis has noted, to set out as pilgrims on a new and life-giving journey. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles provided direction to the early Christian community as it, too, entered a new time and a new place. Fr Donald Senior CP, a renowned Scripture scholar will draw on this biblical wellspring to reflect on the possibilities of Christian discipleship now.

11 to 15 July, Suggested donation: £560

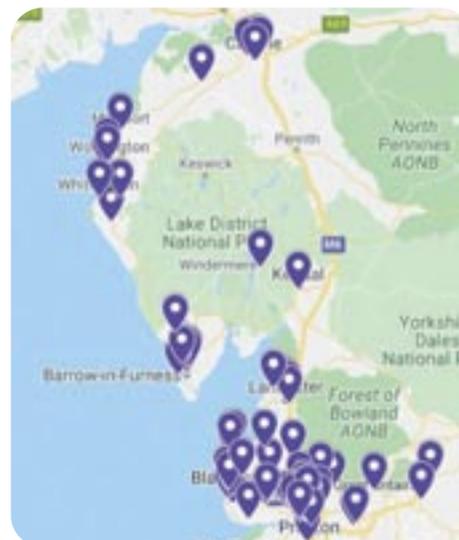
### Memory, Experience and Imagination: Aids to all Things Being Made New led by Rev John Bell, a member of the Iona Community

We tend to sift anything new through one or more of the three sieves of memory (what has been), experience (what is) and imagination (what might be). This is true as much for our spiritual and liturgical life as it is for our health and wellbeing. In his teaching about God's radical kingdom, Jesus draws on the past, present and imagined future to enable us to be open to the newness which God intends.

21 to 23 October, Suggested donation: £220

For information and bookings visit [www.minsteracres.org](http://www.minsteracres.org),  
Phone: 01434 673248 Email: [info@minsteracres.org](mailto:info@minsteracres.org)  
Minsteracres Retreat Centre, nr. Consett,  
County Durham, DH8 9RT

**T**he Catholic Teaching Alliance North started its journey back in 2013 with a shared passion to train and develop outstanding and inspirational teachers, to work within the catholic schools throughout our Diocese and beyond. With an eye on the future and an aspiration to grow Catholic leaders of the future, they have trained a remarkable total of 220 teachers across Early Primary, Primary, Secondary and post 16 education. The Alliance is a cross phase alliance of over 70 schools across the Diocese of Lancaster with 5 teaching training hubs across Lancashire, covering an extensive area from Blackburn to Carlisle. They provide PGCE with QTS in partnership with Cumbria University. Based at Our Lady's Catholic High School in Preston the training centre is ideally situated for easy access from the M55 and M6.



Teaching is an enormously challenging profession but the rewards are immense and the CTA firmly believes that the training programme and the support that follows is of the highest quality, preparing their trainee teachers to face the demands of any classroom and to meet the needs of the pupils within it.

Teaching placements across the partnership ensure that trainees are immersed in the Catholic Ethos and holistic life of the school, whilst also being given opportunities to work alongside outstanding teaching professionals, to share ideas and build knowledge together.

A super strength of the Alliance is the trained, experienced mentors within the Alliance schools who, are fully committed to supporting the CTA trainees within the classroom and beyond, providing support, challenge and opportunities to flourish.

A quality assured training programme, planned in line with the ITT Core Content Framework and the Teachers' Standards the CTA's PGCE with QTS qualification is full time and lasts for one academic year. To enhance the PGCE with QTS course, upon successful completion trainees can achieve 60 credits towards their MA, an optional completion of two modules of the CCRS and the PSHE Association Teaching Award.

Past trainees working within the Catholic Schools within the Diocese describe their journey into teaching:



**PRIMARY**

**Rhiannon Pearson, Year 1 Teacher  
Holy Family Ingol Preston**



As long as I could remember, I wanted to be a Primary Teacher and when the Catholic Teaching Alliance was recommended to me by a family member, I knew it was the perfect route for me. I completed my undergraduate degree in Psychology before deciding to continue to pursue my dream of teaching. I found the Primary Teaching course informative and gave an insight into lots of different aspects of teaching, with training courses delivered by specialists. I received lots of support both from the course leaders and from my fellow course mates, a group which still bounce ideas off each other to this day. This support continued on my teaching placements and I secured a permanent job at the same school. I have been given lots of opportunities in my job such as leading subjects and helping design a new project-based curriculum. I would recommend the CTA to anyone who is considering becoming a teacher: fantastic placements schools, support and working with a close-knit group of like-minded people, all who have aspirations to teach and guide children.

**Alexandra Cocks**



A teaching assistant in an Alliance primary school is where my journey into teaching began. Before long, I applied to do my teacher training through the CTA. I had seen many of the CTA students come through the school I was working at as a TA and friends of mine had also trained through them. They all expressed their enjoyment for the course and the way it was shaped, so I knew I would be well supported on my journey. Throughout my training, I gained a wealth of experience in different catholic schools and got to experience different parts of teaching such as school trips and extra-curricular clubs, as well as learning how to run a classroom in the most effective way from supportive teachers. Towards the end of my training year, I secured a teaching job in a school within the CTA Alliance. I have now just begun my 4th year of teaching. Throughout this time I have been challenged to continue to develop myself professionally. I lead Computing and Maths throughout the school. This year, I am delivering my own work groups for our local Maths Hub. This has been a fantastic opportunity for me to reach out



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**Mass Listings – February 2022**

**St. Margaret Mary, Sclegate Road, Carlisle**  
Saturdays at 10.00 am  
**Saturday 5th February, 10.00 am**  
Sung Mass for Holy Souls

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

**Friday 25th February: 6.00 pm**  
**High Mass for Feast of St Walburge**  
with veneration of the relic

**Shrine of the English Martyrs, Preston**  
Mondays – Saturdays: 12 noon, Low Mass  
Sundays: 9.00 am, Low Mass  
(Please check the website for any variations:  
<https://licksp.org.uk/preston/>)

**Our Lady & St Michael, Banklands, Workington**  
Second Fridays at 7.00 pm  
(Please always check with Canon Watson before  
travelling: 01900 602114)

**St Mary's, Main Street, Hornby**  
Saturdays at 11.00 am  
(Please check with Fr Docherty before  
travelling: 015242 21246)

Local Representatives: Bob & Jane Latin  
Telephone: 01772 962387  
Email: [lancaster@lms.org.uk](mailto:lancaster@lms.org.uk)  
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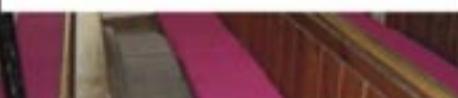
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to other local primary and secondary schools to strengthen links between our schools and improve transition for our pupils from primary to secondary. Not only have the experiences that led me here benefitted my classroom practice, but also my confidence, understanding of the whole school journey and are setting me up for a great career in teaching and leadership.

## SECONDARY

**Alex Thompson, Teacher of Mathematics, Assistant Learning Manager and Assistant principal teacher**

I studied Mathematics and Sports Science at University and for many years after I was unsure of what career paths to follow. On speaking to the director of the CTA I was convinced that a career of teaching was for me and this course was the best place to start. I received lots of support throughout and was given fantastic mentors at both of my secondary placements. Since being appointed as a Teacher of Mathematics I have gone on to achieve other roles such as Assistant Learning Manager and the chance to take on the role of assistant principal teacher on a temporary basis. I would highly recommend the CTA to those thinking of a career in secondary education.

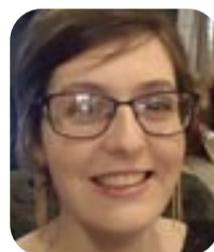
## Maria

After completing a degree in English Language and Linguistics, I felt that I needed some time to consider the different career options that were available to me. As teaching was something I had considered, I started working at a primary school as a TA on supply. During this time, I decided that teaching was the career that I wanted to pursue, albeit in a secondary school instead!

I looked at the different university courses that were available but I could see that the time spent in schools was in small placement chunks. Therefore, I was delighted when I came across the CTA Schools Direct route: it offered considerably more time in school whilst still allowing the trainee teachers to complete a PGCE.

I am now 7 years into my career at a Catholic school in the diocese. I will forever be grateful to Adrian, Mary and the CTA for providing us with high quality training that has enabled me to thoroughly enjoy my career as a teacher.

## Lyndsay Huck



After graduating with a degree in Biochemistry, I worked in the Biotech industry. Teaching became a big part of my role and it was the most satisfying part of my day. After going on maternity leave, I realised that I wanted to be teaching full time and with the support of my family, I was able to change careers.

I researched quite a few training providers but I always kept coming back to the CTA. I really liked the idea of the School Direct training programme. It had a good balance of face-to-face training with time spent on placement. The ability to gain my PGCE through the University of Cumbria was also a huge bonus. I must admit that I was anxious at the enormity of what I was about to embark on but I needn't have been. From the very start we were supported by our course leaders and my fellow students. My first placement was at Christ the King Preston. My mentor, Lisa Matthews, was an incredible support and guide. She honed my skills and inspired me to be the best I could possibly be. I was so excited when I was able to return to the CTK family as a full-time member of staff the following year and I've never looked back. Working with young people had always been a big part of life through Guiding and coaching swimming. It seems cheesy to say that I feel that I found my calling but I really did. The CTA supported me through every step of my teacher training and beyond. I have made lifelong friendships and have a career that I love.

The Catholic Teaching Alliance is committed to working collaboratively with all their trainees in order to achieve the vision and to establish a reputation as an outstanding provider so why not take a leap into teaching and train to teach with the Catholic Teaching Alliance?

*Cate Gili-Ross, Headteacher St Joseph's Primary School Wesham*



## HOW TO APPLY

To apply go to the Department for Education (Find postgraduate teacher training service) website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-postgraduate-teacher-training-courses-in-england> and search for us by postcode PR2 3SQ, name 'Catholic Teaching Alliance' or provider code 1GB. You can also apply directly on 'Apply'.

## Subjects/Phases available for 2022-2023

Early Primary 3-7 years  
General Primary 5-11 years  
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Maths, English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, Physical Education, Religious Education, Computing, Art and Design, Drama, MFL (French and German), Music, PE with EBacc  
Secondary with Post 16 (Cardinal Newman College)  
Dance, Psychology, Social Sciences, Business Studies, Media Studies, Maths, Economics, English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, Physical Education, Religious Education, Health and Social Care, Computing, Art and Design, Drama, MFL (French and German), Music

For more information contact Adrian Gormally on  
**(01772) 326931**  
[CTAschooldirect@olchs.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:CTAschooldirect@olchs.lancs.sch.uk)  
[www.catholic-teaching-alliance.org](http://www.catholic-teaching-alliance.org)

# The Guild of St. Stephen National Presidency comes to Lancaster



Paul Briers with outgoing National President, Michael O'Leary.

**A**t a meeting of the Arch-Confraternity of St. Stephen (Guild of St. Stephen) held in London on 27th November, 2021, Paul Briers from Workington was elected as the new Honorary National President. This is in fact the first time the role has been awarded to someone from outside London.

The Guild of St Stephen is an International Organisation of Altar Servers founded in England in 1904 by Father Hamilton McDonald when he formed a Society of Altar Servers at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in London. In 1905, Pope Pius X gave his approbation to the Canonical establishment of the Guild at Westminster Cathedral and in 1906, the Sacred Congregation of Rites made the Guild an Archconfraternity prima primaria enabling all the parish branches to be linked with it. The Guild spread, and in 1934, Pope Pius XI enabled all Guilds of Altar Servers throughout the British Commonwealth to be affiliated with the Archconfraternity at Westminster. The Guild is, of course, very active in our own Diocese both at Parish and Diocesan level. The objectives of the Guild are:

- To encourage, positively and practically, the highest standards of serving at the Church's liturgy and so contribute to the whole community's participation in a more fruitful worship of God
- To provide altar servers with a greater understanding of what they are doing so that they may serve with increasing reverence and prayerfulness and thereby be led to a

- deepening response to their vocation in life
- To unite servers of different parishes and dioceses for their mutual support and encouragement

Paul will take over as the Chair of the monthly national meetings which comprises of representatives from the Diocese around England and Wales. He has also recently been a leading light in a sub-group entrusted to take the Guild forward and is keen to take forward more practical ideas which will be of benefit to altar servers.

In his acceptance speech, Paul mentioned that what he loved about the Guild were the opportunities available to work with people to make things happen, the families and young people we encounter along the way. We are after all the largest youth organisation in the Catholic Church of England and Wales, he said. Included in his closing comments about the challenge ahead, Paul quoted the words of Pope Francis, "Do not remain closed in on ourselves and our complaints. Lift up your eyes! Get up! Let us allow Jesus to draw us in, to challenge us, awaken in us the courage born of truth. Don't be afraid to dream."

Details of Guild events and Guild of St. Stephen goods, such as medals, certificates, books etc in our own Diocese can be obtained by contacting Ian Mulholland – mulholland.id@gmail.com or 07944857813.



Bishop Paul Swarbrick, John Lord and Michael Wilson.

**O**n a blustery November evening, the Altar Servers, their families, and the Clergy of the diocese, together with Bishop Paul Swarbrick assembled at the Castle Green Hotel in Kendal for the annual Altar Server's dinner.

It was great, as Canon John Watson, the guest speaker remarked, as always at diocesan events in our small but famously friendly diocese, to meet up and see people again after such a long absence due to the pandemic, to cement some of those bonds of friendship, respect and affection, this evening being no exception. This event, an island of near normality in our still uncertain times.

After the meal and a light-hearted quiz, awards were presented by Bishop Paul to several of the dioceses' most experienced servers for 10, 50 and 65 years long service respectively, recognising the remarkable dedication of our lay servers to our parish communities and the diocese at large.

In his after-dinner speech, Canon Watson recounted that at a special Mass he attended recently, he was aware that 'something' was different about it before realising during the Mass, that it was the absence of any Altar Servers at all.

Such has been the difficulties and restrictions in celebrating

the scared liturgies the past 20 months or so. For many churches, this has meant that the Altar Servers, who play such an important part in helping us to pray and ensuring that our liturgies are celebrated worthy and well have been forced into an extended hibernation.

With the gradual lifting of restrictions, our liturgies edging towards near-normal, and with many delayed First Communion programmes coming to fruition, consider how in your parish, the essential ministry of Altar Serving can be used to encourage families back to Mass, for the greater glory of God and the renewal of our communities.

May God who has begun his good work in our servers, bring it to fulfilment. *Paul Woodhouse, Blackpool*

Certificates presented by Rt Rev Paul Swarbrick, Bishop of Lancaster to:

- John Lord – Silver Serving Medal (10 years)
- Michael Wilson – Silver Serving Medal (10 years)
- Peter Silvester – Over 50 years, dedication certificate
- Michael Massey – Over 50 years, dedication certificate
- Joe Reid – Recently retired after 65 years of Serving, dedication certificate

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**Job Opportunity:**  
Warden at St Scholastica's Retreat, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire

Following the retirement of our Warden of the past 15 years, the Trustees of St Scholastica's Retreat are looking for an enthusiastic, energetic, caring and experienced person to deliver a range of services to the residents and Board of Management of St Scholastica's Retreat, an almshouse charity providing 36 self-contained residential units for Roman Catholics in financial need who are over the age of 60 years. We are located in the town of Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire. As Warden, you will play a key role in the day-to-day management of the charity as it plans to expand over the next few years. Day-to-day duties will include assisting the Trustees in fulfilling the charitable and spiritual aims of the Trust: in particular, 'to support elderly Catholics to live independently within the community of St Scholastica's Retreat'. To this end, to act as manager and administrator of St Scholastica's Retreat.

As Clerk to the Trustees, to assist the Trustees in strategic planning for the Trust and for St Scholastica's Retreat. Previous experience of working in the charity sector would be an advantage. The role offers a competitive salary, pension, holiday entitlement and accommodation on-site in a three bedroom house.

For further information about the role of Warden and details of how to apply see <https://www.stscholasticas.co.uk/warden-clerk-vacancy>  
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# A New Year's Resolution you can keep!

**If you're anything like me, your childhood taught you to open a book and treat it with great respect! We were certainly never allowed to underline things, highlight things or scribble or doodle in the margins! Books would only be opened to be read, closed and placed firmly on a shelf. And if you too are like me a dyslexic, then books and reading generally fills the pit of your stomach with dread.**

The Bible, with all that small print, and so much text on such thin pages, was and still is one of the most terrifying books to open! So many words on so many pages. Complex names and places and set in a time sometimes unimaginable. It was impossible to remember let alone understand, so there was no surprise when I shamefully failed my A-level religious studies (*sorry Mr Wawsczyk*) and put the Bible down as one of those books never again to be picked up. Even now years into my adult life, I shrank away from voluntarily opening up my Bible, my copy over 25 years old and still in pristine condition!

Frequently I heard it spoken from the pulpit that us Catholics needed to become more familiar with the Bible. Many priests have preached or run seminars to help us all understand more, but it's a big book, and a lot of explanation is needed! I would sit through these sessions trying with all my might and concentration to absorb but would still come away dazzled!

2021; enter social media, tech and the Bible In a Year (*BIAY*)! A daily podcast offered freely by Ascension, specifically for Catholics to help us read the Bible each day and understand it! With the dulcet tones of Fr. Mike Schmitz, the

podcast isn't just about reading the Bible cover to cover but instead following Jeff Cavin's Bible Timeline. It offers a narrative and context, the story and life of times gone by and how they relate to life today. Clicking on the 'subscribe' button meant that each day at 5am without fail, the next episode is released ready to be digested by millions!

So, on the 1st January 2021, my new resolution began; it was time to stand up to my fears and read the Bible!

Some managed to stay on track. Others like me fell behind. But do you know, when you did fall behind things happened, little coincidences or themes would come through for listening right now. The Holy Spirit worked even when we weren't actively listening, and because you were more into the Word of God, you noticed!

Some like me stopped because life got too busy. But as each day passed, I missed it, and so began pressing 'play' from the last episode I heard.

Others stopped because they felt their mind wandering and wanted to give 100% attention to every single word. They got discouraged and would listen over and over till they got the context and understanding, often flogging the horse and missing out in the joy of this special moment. Others got into the middle of the Exile Period or The Prophets and just bailed out!

But no matter how behind we got, or wherever we got stuck, once we realised that we were not alone and what we needed to do was to surrender, relax, and simply press 'play' so that the Word of God would wash over us. Each day we

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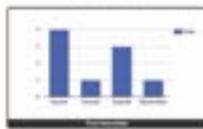
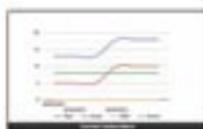
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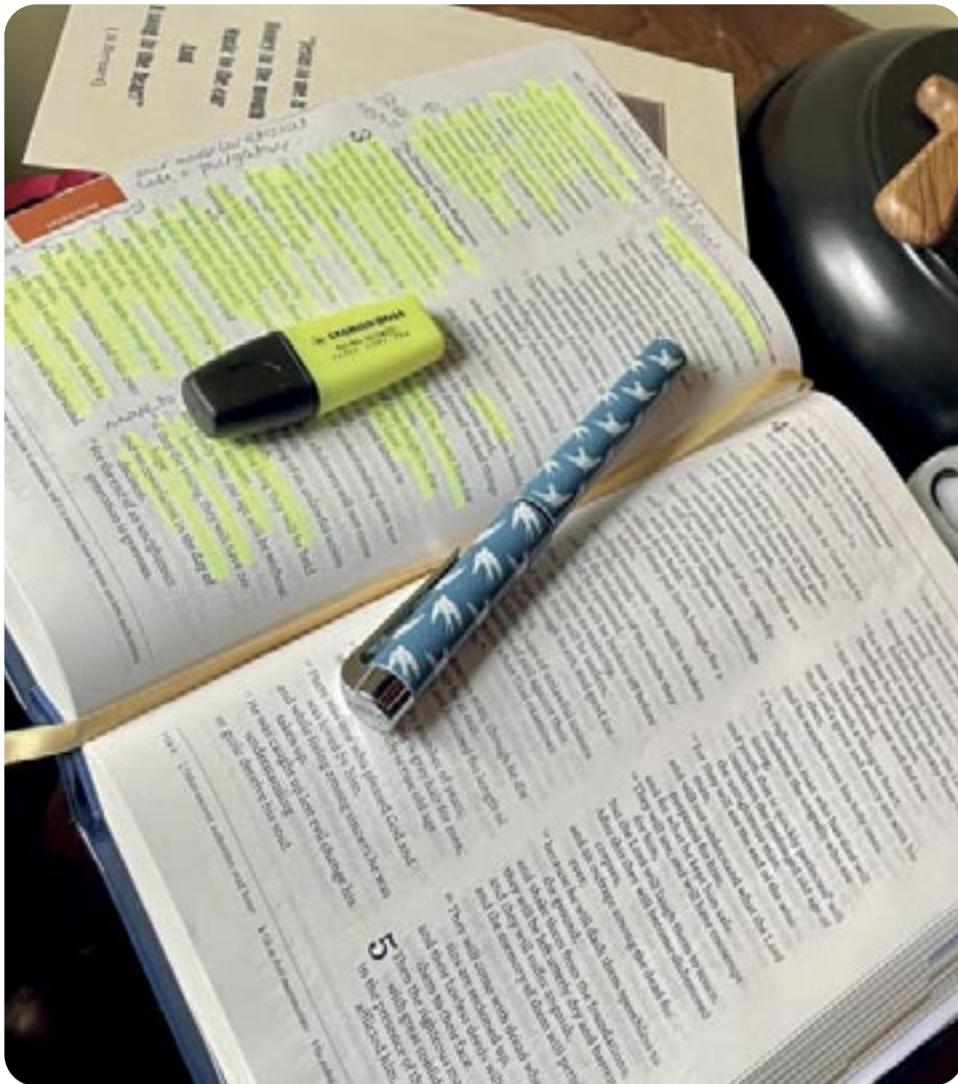


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began to realise that 100% attention, whilst it might have been a great idea wasn't all together necessary.

As I write this article I'm on day 303, about two weeks (14 episodes behind the release).

*"As of November 3, 2021, people have spent 3.3 billion total minutes listening to the podcast. There have been 142 million cumulative downloads, with an average of 464,000 downloads per day. So far, 75,000 Catholics have joined the Ascension Bible in a Year Facebook group. Further, by the end of the podcast on December 31, listeners will have spent 148 hours (that's 6.2 days) this year listening to the word of God!"* (Ascension Press Release 3.11.21)

There are over 142 million cumulative downloads for this Podcast. Thousands of Catholics following this together, and we are a virtual community who pray and support each other on this journey. It's never too late to click Day One and begin. And if you did begin but got lost, just pick up where you left off, take the pressure off, and enjoy.

We all have responsibilities, and our time is precious, but 20 mins (maybe occasionally 30 mins) a day of sitting down with your headphones on the presence of God is possible, even if you're (especially if you're) exhausted and worn out! This is 20 mins a day you can class as prayer time and your time without you inputting in any way other than listening and following along. It's really really worth it!

The BIAY has been my lifeline through this strange year. It's strengthened the depth of my relationship with God, and it has helped me to understand our history

and how we are His people of today. Reading the history of the chosen people has helped me understand humanity, conflict and the infinite patience and mercy of God. And when life has gotten tough, it has given me somewhere to escape to, like any good book does!

The level of healing that I personally have felt from the context narrative and prayers led by Fr Mike's short talks has been exceptional and completely unexpected. And it has all helped me understand my catholic faith in far more depth.

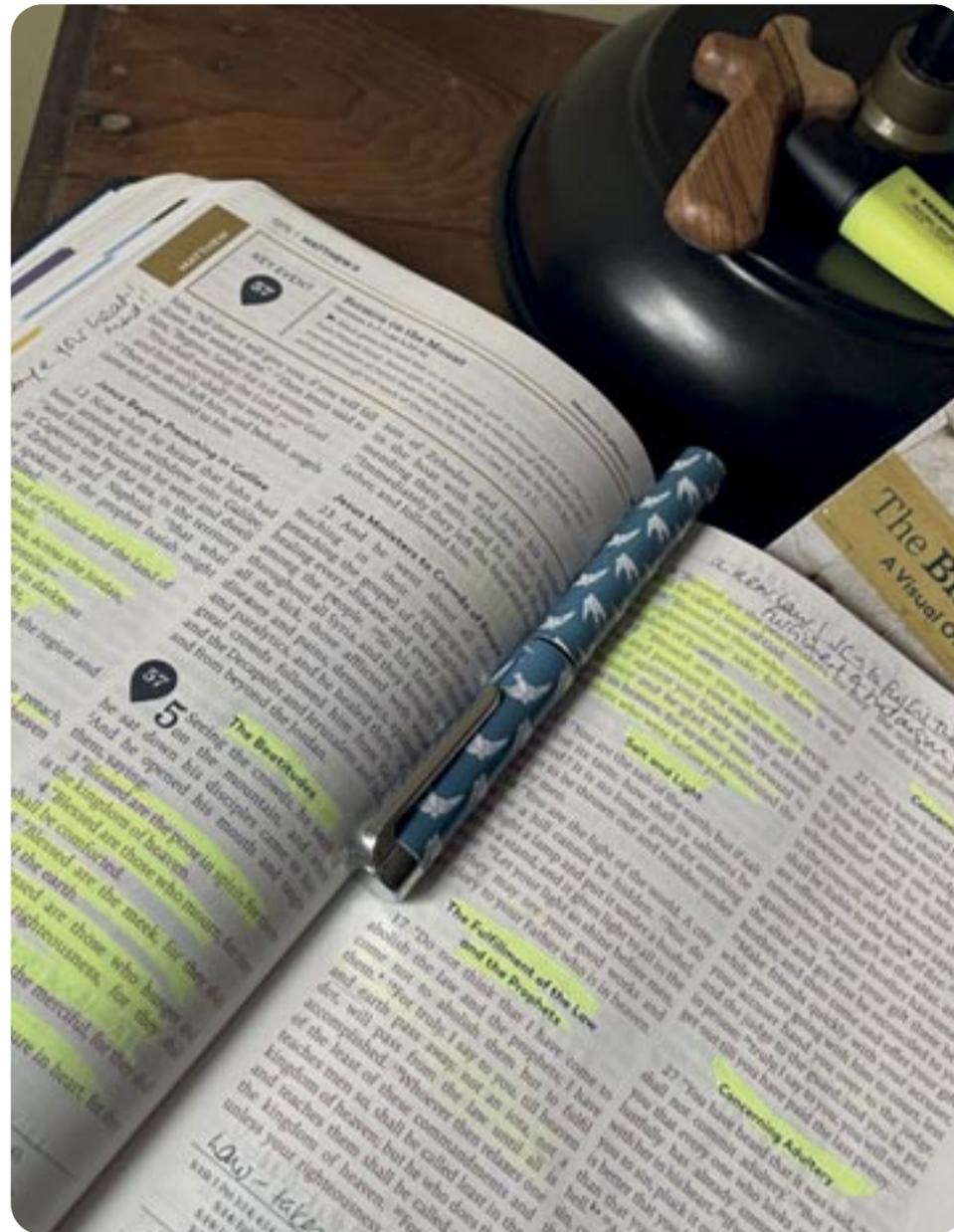
In a week's time the Old Testament will be completed, and I can't wait to finish off the New Testament gospels understanding now what I know. But strangely I will miss the land of the Old Testament. Any great story, any great film or adventure has certainly gained so much of its inspiration from the Old Testament!

So, if you set new year's resolutions (or don't at all) try this and don't be scared! Don't put it off find Ascension Press and pop on your headphones. Revel in the opportunity to be in the presence of God more and let the Holy Spirit speak. If you have a Bible, don't be afraid to open it, follow along, highlight doodle or jot notes in the margins! Take the easy road to understanding and reading the Bible by tapping the 'play' button! I promise you, it will be worth it! In Fr Mike's famous words "I'm praying for you... please pray for me.."

**Find the Podcast:**

The Bible in a Year Archives - Ascension Press Media. Available on Apple Podcast, Hallow App and various others.

*Lisa Vallente-Osborne*



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# My Dilemma

## by Frank McGrath



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**T**he dictionary in the prison library tells me that a dilemma is a position where each of the two alternative courses is eminently undesirable. I must decide tonight on one course or another with life changing consequences whichever I choose.

I will explain.

My name is Nick. I am 27 years old and serving the last 9 months of a prison sentence for assaulting a police officer. The offence is my first brush with the law and my last. I will not be returning to prison. I pleaded guilty.

I had to, even though Sergeant Jones deserved every punch and kick I rained on him. He was blackmailing my girlfriend Penny.

Jones found out that Penny had wrongly claimed to be driving her dad's car when it had been speeding. Penny received three points and a £40 fine and her dad reimbursed her and saved his license.

We don't know how Jones, who did not work in the traffic division, found out about Penny's false statement. Penny never told anyone. She never even told me. Penny's dad, who is a loner, would not tell anyone anything important. I doubt if he would tell you the time if you asked him.

Jones told Penny that if she did not have sex with him, he would make sure that

she and her dad would get two years for perverting the course of justice. At first Penny did not tell me about her problem with Jones. I knew something was wrong. Penny had become pre-occupied, withdrawn and irritable. She seemed to have lost her confidence, enthusiasm, and vitality. I was very worried.

Penny and I have been together since she was 13 and I was 14 years old. We met at school. I thought she was going to finish with me. Penny is my world. I have always thought I was lucky to have Penny as my girlfriend. Penny is a wonderful person.

I confronted her. I was relentless. I was determined to find out what was going on. Eventually she told me about Sgt Jones' threats. I was relieved. I know that sounds stupid. If Penny finished with me, it would be the end. Anything was better than that.

I met Jones. I asked him to explain himself. He called Penny a liar. I lost it. He was hospitalised for 10 days. I was charged.

Penny hates violence. She was furious with me. As my court date approached, she relented. She visits me each week in prison. We are planning our future together. All is sweet. Well, that's not exactly true.

I share a cell with Oliver. He is in for supplying. We get on well together. We respect each other and agree between



ourselves when and what to watch on TV. We play scrabble and chess. Two weeks ago, Oliver got into a shouting match with a prison officer, Joe Winter. Winter singled Oliver out for criticism for not clearing leftover food from the tables after lunch. Joe Winter is disliked. The lads think he is motivated by spite and likes to cause trouble. Oliver told me he felt humiliated and was being challenged by the lads to confront Winter. This week Oliver has been told that he has lost his enhanced status and would no longer enjoy earned privileges. It would be 6 months before he could be enhanced again. Oliver was furious. Oliver knew he could appeal the decision but felt that this was a waste of time. Oliver told me he would sort out Joe Winter. I asked him what he meant, and he said I would know soon enough.

Earlier tonight, when Oliver was on a visit, I was looking for our shared TV guide. I moved a pile of Oliver's clean clothes and there it was.

My heart pounded. I felt my bowels move. I was struggling to breathe. I had to sit down. I felt very dizzy. I've heard it said that during a car crash many thoughts go through your head in slow motion. I knew I must make a life changing decision. I closed my eyes and prayed it would disappear. I opened them. There it was a large knife. I knew instinctively what it was for. I could see Joe Winter led in a pool of his own blood - stab wounds in his body, dead.

I had to act. Fast. What was I to do?

Even if I did nothing the inactivity was a decision with serious consequences. If I told the officers (*not Winter*) what I had found I would be 'grassing up' Oliver. It is the unwritten rule amongst inmates that you do not report misconduct to the officers. Those who do are usually found out and called 'grasses' the lowest of the low and treated very badly. It appeared to me I had to choose between a person being seriously injured, possibly

killed and being a grass and treated accordingly. I knew what I had to do. I really had no alternative, or did I? It was recreation time. I could leave my cell and go onto the wing where lads were playing snooker and pool, stood around talking or waiting to use the phone. I knew I had to act quickly. Each minute could be crucial.

I set off down the wing with the knife wrapped in my towel in my gym bag. I was heading for the showers. I knew that if I was stopped and searched, I would be in trouble. I was on my own. Loud music was coming from cell A1-06 - it was 'bat out of hell' by Meatloaf - stupidly it seemed to spur me on. I went past the servery and then disaster.

Senior Officer Bill Springs saw me and shouted to me to follow him into his office. What did he know? What did he want? I immediately realised that I would face extra time in prison for having the knife. What would I tell Penny?

I walked into the office. I was frightened. No, I was terrified. I felt faint. I sat down without being asked. The S/O looked at me strangely as he stood over me. My breathing was erratic. My palms were wet. I knew I was in big trouble and then he told me he had to find volunteers for a new victim awareness course. I agreed. Perhaps too readily, I got up and left. The S/O followed me out. I could feel his eyes burning into the back of my head. I went towards the laundry. Just as I was about to open the door Bill Springs shouted to me again. I turned around. He asked me if the door needed unlocking, I tried the door, it did not. I told him by using sign language Peter Kay would be proud of. Bill Springs responded by putting his thumb up and set off down the wing in the opposite direction, probably looking for other hapless volunteers.

I entered the laundry. I took the knife, located the grill above the drains, removed the grill and dropped the knife into the deep hole. It disappeared along with my dilemma.

## Can you help Fr Bob?

Fr Bob Halshaw, Head of Chaplaincy at HMP Haverigg and Lancaster Diocesan Prison's Liaison, is appealing for Volunteers to become Official Prison Visitors at Haverigg Prison. If anyone is inspired by the prospect and would like to discuss matters further he may be contacted at [Robert.halshaw@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.halshaw@justice.gov.uk) and on 01229 713152.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service has a Statutory obligation to encourage all prisoners to maintain contact with the world outside prison in order to assist in their successful rehabilitation and resettlement back into society. For a number of prisoners who have unfortunately lost contact with family and friends, or whose relatives live abroad, this can be difficult. There are also some prisoners who, while enjoying regular contact with friends/relatives here, would welcome the opportunity to expand their friendships beyond their normal circle of acquaintances.

**Through the hard work of its volunteers, the official Prison Visitors Scheme can provide this valuable support, thereby ensuring that such links are available to all prisoners, irrespective of their need.**

*(Source Handbook for Official Prison Visitors)*

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The 2 year Certificate in Relationship Counselling course will start in Spring

2022 and will be delivered via a programme of face to face and online training weekends. This training opportunity has been made possible in thanks to the generous support of the Diocese of Westminster Cardinal's Lenten Appeal Fund and the voluntary commitment of Marriage Care's training team and Centre members. Whilst there is no charge to trainees for the course itself, if selected there is a non-refundable deposit of £150 to secure your place and we invite trainees to set up a monthly donation (suggested amount of £40) for the first 12 months - towards costs of accommodation and meals at training weekends.

For more information visit our webpage: [www.marriagecare.org.uk/crc](http://www.marriagecare.org.uk/crc) or access the QR code above.

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