

Press Release

**INSTITUTE OF CHRIST THE KING SOVEREIGN PRIEST
TO ASSUME CARE OF ENGLISH MARTYRS' CHURCH, PRESTON**

**Bishop of Lancaster announces Landmark church of English Martyrs, Preston to be saved
and secured for the future**



The Catholic Diocese of Lancaster

9 July 2017

STATEMENT BEGINS:

The historic and landmark (Grade II Listed) Catholic Church of St Thomas of Canterbury & the English Martyrs on Garstang Road, Preston (known simply as English Martyrs) has been given a promise of a sustainable future following an announcement made today by the Bishop of Lancaster, the Rt Rev Michael G Campbell OSA.

Bishop Michael Campbell and Monsignor Gilles Wach, Prior General of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, together with Rector, Canon Adrian Towers, have agreed that, as from the autumn, the Institute will assume the administration of the church.

This move will enable the church to be open each day to become a vibrant shrine of devotion to and promotion of the English Martyrs under the care of the Institute who already have the administration of St Walburge's Shrine Church, Weston Street, Preston. The new shrine will specifically provide for the celebration of Holy Mass and the other Sacraments in the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite.

English Martyrs' Church is one of two church buildings belonging to St John XXIII Parish, Preston – the other being St Joseph's on Skeffington Road. As part of the arrangement with the Institute, English Martyrs church remains part of St John XXIII Parish and a priest from there will celebrate an English-language ordinary form Mass in the church, at least for the next 12 months, each Saturday evening.

Recently, the Mass attendance at English Martyrs has averaged around 70 people and activities and voluntary parish involvement have become somewhat limited making it difficult for the parishioners to shoulder their responsibility for the care of the church building.

Bishop Campbell upon making this announcement commented:

"We are very grateful for the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest and the dedication they have to evangelizing through use of the extraordinary form," Bishop Campbell continued "The Institute has shown tremendous energy in conveying a sense of the sacred through their proven ministry at St Walburge's and around the world. We are especially encouraged that their care and ministry in large and historic churches may also be instrumental in preserving English Martyrs church now and going forward."

Canon Amaury Montjean for the Institute added:

"We are deeply grateful to Bishop Campbell for his gracious invitation. Our entire Institute family is very glad for this new apostolate at English Martyrs. Like St Walburge's, it will be a unique spiritual home offering Masses with sacred music, daily confessions, days of recollection, classes in spirituality and doctrine etc".

Bishop Campbell concluded:

“Finally and importantly, the announcement of this initiative will ensure the future sustainability and patrimony of English Martyrs’ church; a building so dear to local Catholics and many others in Preston. Thankfully, this announcement means English Martyrs is saved from the prospect of closure and is thus secured for the future. The fact that the church will be used each day for prayer and cared for by the Institute means it will continue to witness to the faith and mission of the Catholic Church in Preston for many years to come.”

STATEMENT ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- The **English Martyrs’ Church** is located near to Preston city centre and stands on the corner of the A6 (Garstang Road), between Aqueduct Street and St George's Road. English Martyrs Church is built on the site of an area that used to be called Gallows Hill. It received that name after the Battle of Preston of the Jacobite rising of 1715. After the government overcame the rebel army, it was on Gallows Hill that the rebel prisoners were executed. On the 5 January 1715, it was recorded that sixteen rebels 'were hanged upon Gallows Hill, for high treason and conspiracy.'
- [The Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest](#) is based internationally in Florence, Italy. In many cases, the Institute’s ministry has revitalized and allowed for the restoration of historic churches. The Institute was established canonically in 1990 by Monsignor Gilles Wach and Father Phillippe Mora. Inspired by their patron, St Francis de Sales, the Institute strives to form its people in holiness according to their motto of "teaching the truth with charity".
- In September 2014, the Institute assumed the care of [St Walburge’s Church, Preston](#), at Bishop Campbell’s invitation – the Bishop designating the Church as a shrine church.