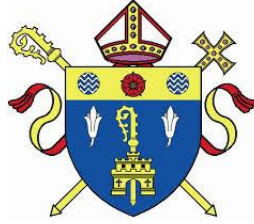


5 July 2016



DIOCESE DELIGHTED WITH ROOF REPAIR GRANT FOR ST IGNATIUS' CHURCH, PRESTON

News that St Ignatius Catholic Church in Preston is to get £99,900 towards roof repairs as part of the *Listed Places of Worship - Roof Repair Fund* has been greeted with delight from the Catholic Diocese of Lancaster. The news follows and crowns the 'saving' of this historic and beautiful church from closure by Bishop Michael Campbell in January 2015 as a centre for the mission and life of the Syro-Malabar Catholic community (from Kerala, India) in the region.

In October 2015, the Syro-Malabar Major Archbishop, Cardinal George Alencherry celebrated a special Mass to launch the new centre at St Ignatius and to also inaugurate the two personal parishes erected in the Diocese by Bishop Campbell to care for the pastoral needs of the Syro-Malabar faithful. These personal parishes – one is for Preston and based at St Ignatius - are the first of their kind - for the Syro-Malabar Church - in Europe.

Over 250 people – many of them children, teenagers and young working professionals with their families - attend the current single Sunday Mass at St Ignatius with an additional scheduled Mass to follow shortly. The usual rounds of Baptisms, First Communion and Confirmations are now re-established in this vibrant parish. Recently, 9 family units have been formed as basic Christian communities to support prayer and faith formation in the family. The Keralan Sisters of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel are settling well and are now involved in diocesan apostolates and also catechetical work in the Syro-Malabar parish. Such a foundation is the first of its kind of Syro-Malabar Religious Sisters in Great Britain.

The Bishop of Lancaster, The Rt Rev Michael G Campbell OSA comments:

“I am so very pleased with the awarding of this grant which is the fruit of so much hard work and planning – all for the good of St Ignatius' Church and the Syro-Malabar Parish of St Alphonsa at St Ignatius. Sincere thanks, of course, go to *The Listed Places of Worship - Roof Repair Fund*. ”

The Bishop continues:

“I congratulate everyone involved in the application process and especially Parish Priest Father Mathew Jacob Choorapoikayil for all the work involved. Of course, the work for the complete re-generation of St Ignatius Church and presbytery goes on, under God, and with our full support.”

Notes:

1. The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church is in full communion with the Pope, the Bishop of Rome.
2. The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church has now more than 4 million members worldwide and traces its origin to St Thomas the Apostle, who is said to have reached the shore of Kerala, India in 52AD.
3. What was the *Syro-Malabar Chaplaincy in the Diocese of Lancaster* was founded in 2004 by Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue.