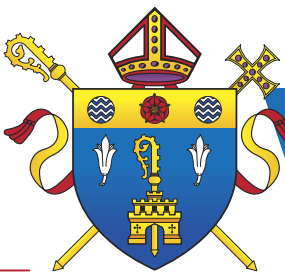


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of Lancaster

The Official Newspaper to  
the Diocese of Lancaster

Issue 326 + February '21

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p12 Hope through Pain



# Pope Francis proclaims 'Year of St Joseph'

In a new Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* ('With a Father's Heart'), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

The Letter marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX's declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To celebrate the anniversary, Pope Francis has proclaimed a special 'Year of St Joseph' which began on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extends to the same feast in 2021.

The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence," who nonetheless played "an incomparable role in the history of salvation."

Pope Francis urges the Church to pray:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,  
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.  
To you God entrusted his only Son;  
in you Mary placed her trust;  
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,  
show yourself a father  
and guide us in the path of life.  
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,  
and defend us from every evil. Amen.



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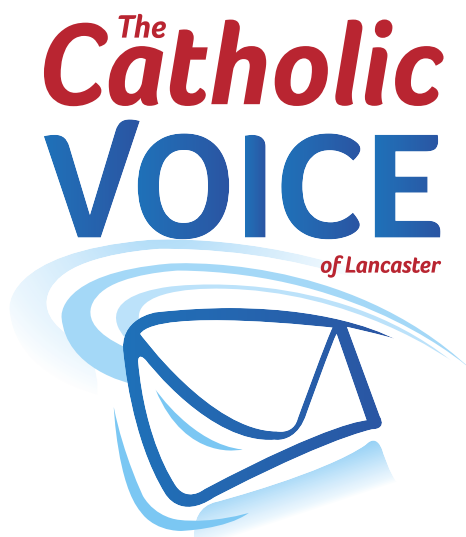
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**EDITORIAL**

**A** new year, a new start! The events of 2020 certainly reset the bar with exceptional works of mercy and kindness being shown across the land. The cries of those struggling to cope, worried about where the next meal was coming from were heard by local communities everywhere who stepped up to the plate to help. Some might argue that there should be no need for communities to help in this way and such matters should be left to those with executive powers. But as Christians helping our neighbour should be second nature, it is part of DNA. So long may it continue throughout 2021 and beyond. It is this practical face of Christ that allows us to be true witnesses in our world of need. It is worth reminding ourselves of the words of St Theresa of Avila when she said:

*'Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours'*

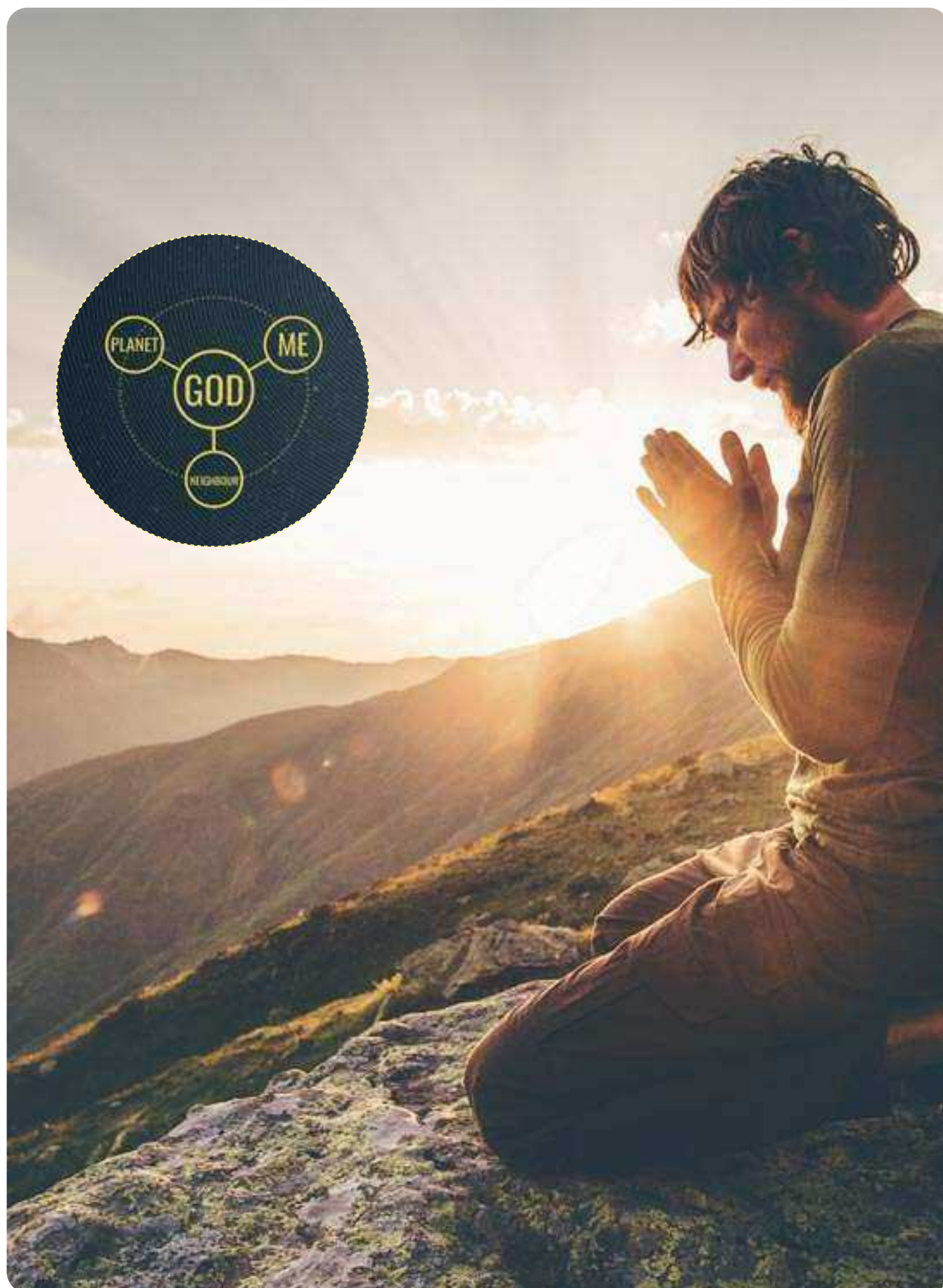
To deliver on such a challenging remit it is necessary for our spiritual selves to be sustained by the Eucharist and personal prayer, both require constant topping up or we will simply wear ourselves out and lose focus. So this is another challenge to remain spiritually 'fit' to meet the needs of those around us.

And we cannot ignore either the challenge of Global Warming which is having such a devastating effect on our world, a huge issue – too big for us to handle one might say. But no, our personal changes in what and how much we eat, what we buy and how (and how often) we travel can and will make a difference.

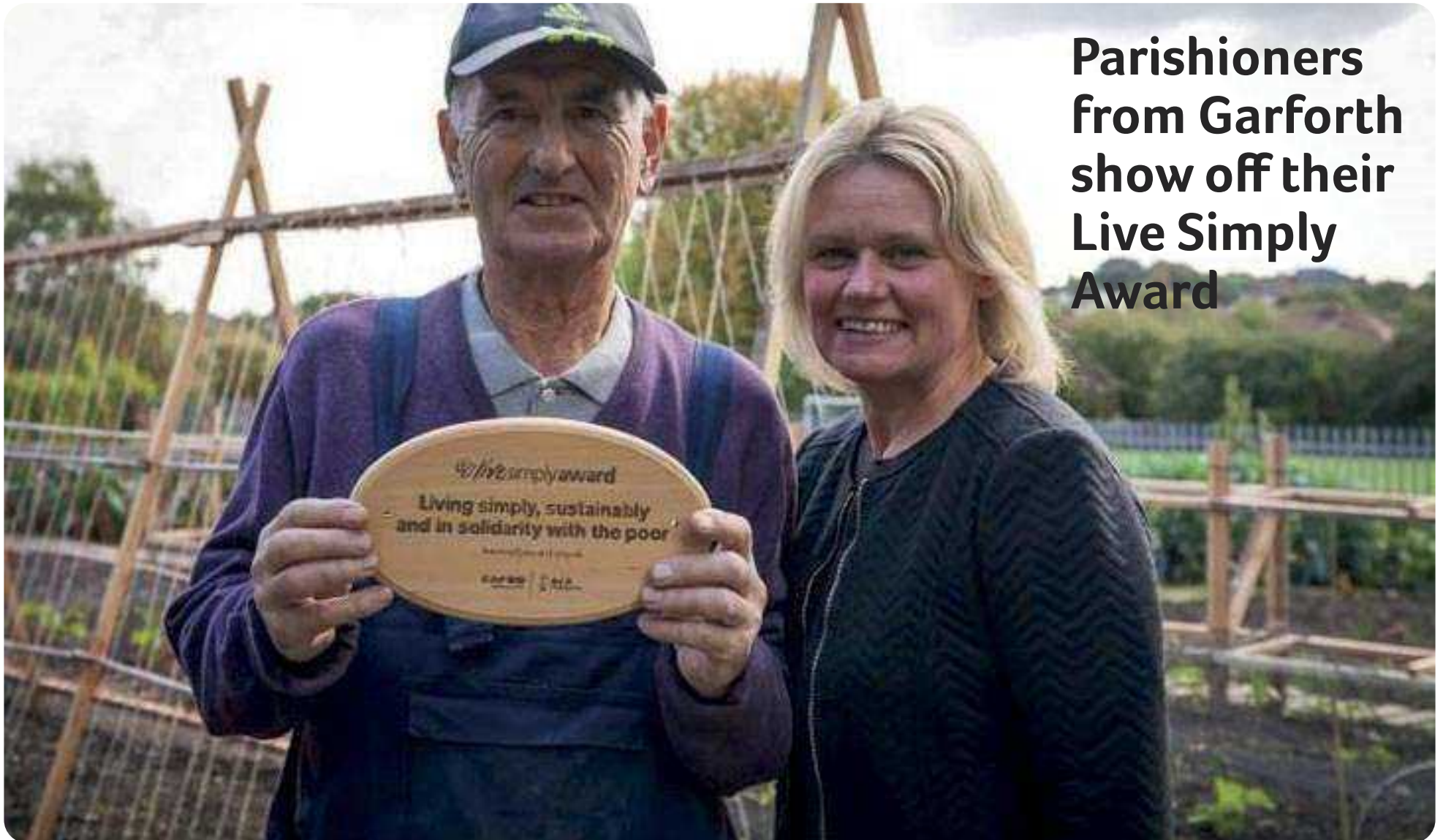
So three big challenges,

**Love of God,  
Love of Neighbour  
and Love of Creation.**

Let's hope that when we look back on 2021 we can do so knowing that we have made a difference or at least tried to!







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**A**s you might expect, online Ministry is going to be a big focus for the Youth Service in 2021. Hopefully, we will be getting retreats back at Castlerigg Manor too, but even without the difficulties of Covid 19, it's a direction that we definitely need to go in.

In December, we ran a confirmation retreat online and it was very well received? It's something we're planning to repeat. The wonder that is zoom also meant that we didn't have to cancel our annual past team retreat. That was also online (photo) and around 20 people joined at one time or another.

We've got four more online opportunities coming up in the next few months. These ones, in fact:

#### RISE Online

RISE is a series of youth groups we've been running in parishes around the diocese. Starting in 2021, we're going to be taking it online! Anyone in Year 7, 8 or 9 can join and it's totally free. It's open to anyone, even outside the diocese!

#### OVERFLOW

Overflow is a similar thing – an online group – but this time for young adults. It's aimed at people aged 18-25 who are interested in making a few friends, having a bit of fun and deepening their faith.



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### ENGAGE (March)

ENGAGE is our popular online course for anyone who is interested in Catholic Youth Ministry. There are ten sessions, each lasting one hour and delivered over ten weeks. The sessions are led by some of the biggest names in Catholic Youth Ministry in the UK. The course is aimed at those who are just starting out (or recently started) in youth ministry, but the content is also accessible to those who've got a bit of experience too.

ENGAGE will start in March. You can buy earlybird tickets and find out more online at [www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/engage](http://www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/engage)

### YMHFA Feb

Finally, on February 25-26th we are offering a Youth Mental Health First Aid course online. As part of our new Training Centre, we offer the MHFA England two day Youth Mental Health First Aid course, and again it's all on zoom!

This is a great course for teachers, youth leaders, parents, and anybody who works with children and young people.

More information, including a booking form, at [www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/youth-mental-health-first-aid](http://www.castleriggmanor.co.uk/youth-mental-health-first-aid)

### STAY IN TOUCH

During 2020, we put a lot of work into ways people can stay in touch with us and stay connected. We've now got a database, which we're asking people to sign up to. It's our way of making sure you know what's going on.

More recently, we've completely revamped our social media. We've now got separate streams for adult leaders, young people (and young adults), and our Training Centre, with the Facebook page being what we refer to as the 'mothership' covering everything (photo of screens opposite).



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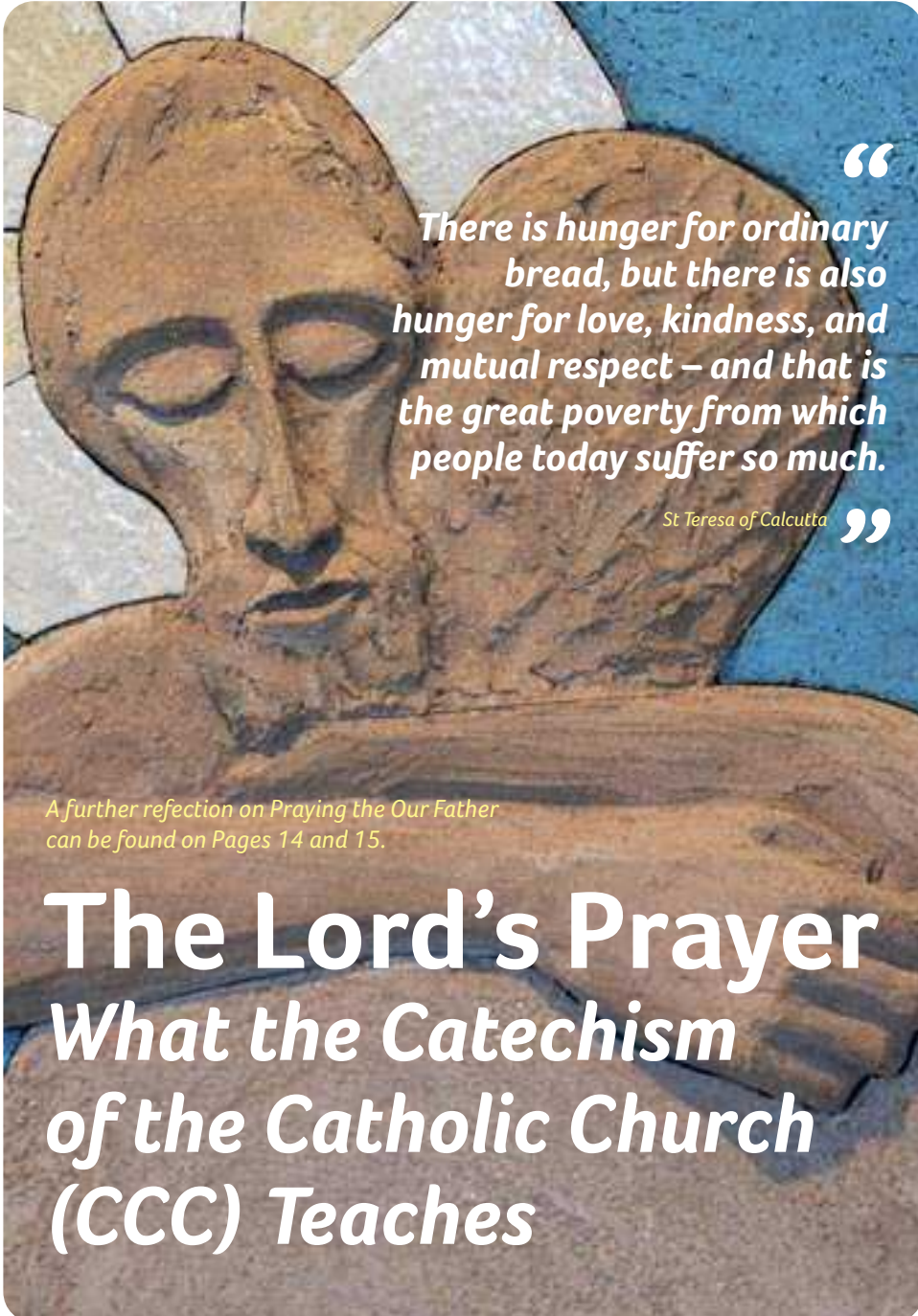
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“  
There is hunger for ordinary bread, but there is also hunger for love, kindness, and mutual respect – and that is the great poverty from which people today suffer so much.  
”

St Teresa of Calcutta

A further reflection on Praying the Our Father can be found on Pages 14 and 15.

# The Lord's Prayer

## What the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Teaches

### What is the place of the Our Father in the Scriptures?

The Our Father is the 'summary of the whole Gospel' (Tertullian), 'the perfect prayer' (St Thomas Aquinas). Found in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), it presents in the form of prayer the essential content of the Gospel.  
*Further reading: CCC 2761-2764, 2774*

### Why is it called the 'Lord's Prayer'?

The Our Father is called the "Oratio Dominica", that is, the Lord's Prayer because it was taught to us by the Lord Jesus himself.  
*Further reading: CCC 2765-2766, 2775*

### What place does the Our Father have in the prayer of the Church?

The Lord's Prayer is the prayer of the Church par excellence. It is 'handed on' in Baptism to signify the new birth of the children of God into the divine life. The full meaning of the Our Father is revealed in the Eucharist since its petitions are based on the mystery of salvation already accomplished, petitions that will be fully heard at the coming of the Lord. The Our Father is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Hours.  
*Further reading: CCC 2767-2772, 2776*

### Why can we dare to draw near to God in full confidence?

Because Jesus, our Redeemer, brings us into the Father's presence and his Spirit makes us his children. We are thus able to pray the Our Father with simple and filial trust, with joyful assurance and humble boldness, with the certainty of being loved and heard.  
*Further reading: CCC 2777-2778, 2797*

### How is it possible to address God as 'Father'?

We can invoke the 'Father' because the Son of God made man has revealed him to us and because his Spirit makes him known to us. The invocation, Father, lets us enter into his mystery with an ever new sense of wonder and awakens in us the desire to act as his children. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are therefore aware of our being sons of the Father in the Son.  
*Further reading: CCC 2779-2785, 2789, 2798-2800*

### Why do we say 'Our' Father?

'Our' expresses a totally new relationship with God. When we pray to the Father, we adore and glorify him with the Son and the Holy Spirit. In Christ we are "his" people and he is "our" God now and for eternity. In fact, we also say "our" Father because the Church of Christ is the communion of a multitude of brothers and sisters who have but "one heart and mind" (Acts 4:32).  
*Further reading: CCC 2786-2790, 2801*

### With what spirit of communion and mission do we pray to God as 'Our' Father?

Since praying to 'Our' Father is a common blessing for the baptised, we feel an urgent summons to join in Jesus' prayer for the unity of his disciples. To pray the "Our Father" is to pray with all people and for all people that they may know the one true God and be gathered into unity.  
*Further reading: CCC 2791-2793, 2801*

### What does the phrase 'Who art in heaven' mean?

This biblical expression does not

indicate a place but a way of being: God transcends everything. The expression refers to the majesty, the holiness of God, and also to his presence in the hearts of the just. Heaven, or the Father's house, constitutes our true homeland toward which we are moving in hope while we are still on earth. 'Hidden with Christ in God' (Colossians 3:3), we live already in his homeland.  
*Further reading: CCC 2794-2796, 2802*

### What is the structure of the Lord's Prayer?

It contains seven petitions made to God the Father. The first three, more God-centered, draw us toward him for his glory; it is characteristic of love to think first of the beloved. These petitions suggest in particular what we ought to ask of him: the sanctification of his Name, the coming of his Kingdom, and the fulfilment of his will. The last four petitions present to the Father of mercies our wretchedness and our expectations. They ask him to feed us, to forgive us, to sustain us in temptations, and to free us from the Evil One.  
*Further reading: CCC 2803-2806, 2857*

### What does 'Hallowed be thy Name' mean?

To hallow or make holy the Name of God is above all a prayer of praise that acknowledges God as holy. In fact, God revealed his holy Name to Moses and wanted his people to be consecrated for him as a holy nation in which he would dwell.  
*Further reading: CCC 2807-2812, 2858*

### How is the Name of God made holy in us and in the world?

To make holy the Name of God, who calls us "to holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7) is to desire that our baptismal consecration animate our whole life. In addition, it is to ask - with our lives and our prayers - that the Name of God be known and blessed by every man.  
*Further reading: CCC 2813-2815*

### What does the Church ask for when she prays 'Thy Kingdom come'?

The Church prays for the final coming of the Kingdom of God through Christ's return in glory. The Church prays also that the Kingdom of God increase from now on through people's sanctification in the Spirit and through their commitment to the service of justice and peace in keeping with the Beatitudes. This petition is the cry of the Spirit and the Bride: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).  
*Further reading: CCC 2816-2821, 2859*

### Why pray 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'?

The will of the Father is that 'all men be saved' (1 Timothy 2:4). For this Jesus came: to perfectly fulfil the saving will of his Father. We pray God our Father to unite our will to that of his son after the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. We ask that this loving plan be fully realised on earth as it is already in heaven. It is through prayer that we can discern 'what is the will of God' (Romans 12:2) and have the "steadfastness to do it" (Hebrews 10:36).  
*Further reading: CCC 2822-2827, 2860*


### What is the sense of the petition 'Give us this day our daily bread'?

Asking God with the filial trust of children for the daily nourishment which is

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necessary for us all we recognize how good God is, beyond all goodness. We ask also for the grace to know how to act so that justice and solidarity may allow the abundance of some to remedy the needs of others.

*Further reading: CCC 2828-2834, 2861*

#### What is the specifically Christian sense of his petition?

Since 'man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God' (Matthew 4:4), this petition equally applies to hunger for the Word of God and for the Body of Christ received in the Eucharist as well as hunger for the Holy Spirit. We ask this with complete confidence for this day - God's "today" - and this is given to us above all in the Eucharist which anticipates the banquet of the Kingdom to come.

*Further reading: CCC 2835-2837, 2861*

#### Why do we say 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'?

By asking God the Father to pardon us, we acknowledge before him that we are sinners. At the same time we proclaim his mercy because in his Son and through the sacraments 'we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins' (Colossians 1:14). Still our petition will be answered only if we for our part have forgiven first.

*Further reading: CCC 2838-2839, 2862*

#### How is forgiveness possible?

Mercy can penetrate our hearts only if we ourselves learn how to forgive - even our enemies. Now even if it seems impossible for us to satisfy this requirement, the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit can, like Christ, love even to love's extreme; it can turn injury

into compassion and transform hurt into intercession. Forgiveness participates in the divine mercy and is a high-point of Christian prayer.

*Further reading: CCC 888-890, 939*

#### What does 'Lead us not into temptation' mean?

We ask God our Father not to leave us alone and in the power of temptation. We ask the Holy Spirit to help us know how to discern, on the one hand, between a trial that makes us grow in goodness and a temptation that leads to sin and death and, on the other hand, between being tempted and consenting to temptation. This petition unites us to Jesus who overcame temptation by his prayer. It requests the grace of vigilance and of final perseverance.

*Further reading: CCC 2846-2849, 2863*

#### Why do we conclude by asking 'But deliver us from evil'?

'Evil' indicates the person of Satan who opposed God and is 'the deceiver of the whole world' (Revelation 12:9). Victory over the devil has already been won by Christ. We pray, however, that the human family be freed from Satan and his works. We also ask for the precious gift of peace and the grace of perseverance as we wait for the coming of Christ who will free us definitively from the Evil One.

*Further reading: CCC 2850-2854, 2864*

#### What is the meaning of the final Amen?

'At the end of prayer, you say 'Amen' and thus you ratify by this word that means 'so be it' all that is contained in this prayer that God has taught us.' (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem)

*Further reading: CCC 888-890, 939*





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# Top Class

**N**iamh (aged 14) a Year 10 student at St Bedes High School Lytham has been involved in Lytham St Anne's Fylde Action Impact Youth Group for several years. Before the start of lockdown, the Group met at their local McDonalds to plan a programme of meetings for the Youth Group spanning the course of the next few months, then lockdown took place. Instead of being deterred by this Niamh kept in touch with the youth group through Whatsapp, sending letters to members

and their families, checking in to see if they were ok and if they were needing any support.

Niamh also arranged twice monthly Zoom meetings for the Action Group members to keep everyone in touch. As part of their time together online they also produced a video called 'Listen to me' to support young people's wellbeing and mental health. One member of the group said if we don't care for one another, no one else will, kindness really matters.



## WHO WAS PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI?

- Aged 17, he joined the SVP and spent his spare time serving the sick and the needy, caring for orphans, and assisting the demobilised servicemen returning from World War I.
- He studied to become a mining engineer, so he could "serve Christ better among the miners."
- He was involved in the People's Party, which promoted the Catholic Church's teachings.
- What little he had, Pier helped the poor, even using his bus fare for charity and then running home to be on time for meals.
- His charity did not simply involve giving something to others but **giving completely of himself.**



- Pier smiled and laughed so freely that he was called "an explosion of joy." In his 20's, he was the picture of strength and health, leading friends into the Alps to scale mountain peaks.
- He died aged 24 on July 4, 1925 after contracting poliomyelitis, which doctors speculated he caught from the sick whom he tended.
- On the eve of his death, he scribbled a message to a friend, asking him to take the medicine needed for injections to be given to Converso, a poor sick man he had been visiting.
- His cause for canonisation opened in 1932. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in mid-1990 who dubbed him the "Man of the Eight Beatitudes."
- Pope John Paul II, in 1989: "I wanted to pay homage to a young man who was able to witness to Christ with singular effectiveness in this century of ours. When I was a young man, I, too, felt the beneficial influence of his example and, as a student, I was impressed by the force of his testimony."



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from  
**Niamh!**

### Congratulations Niamh, great work!

The Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati Award is hosted by Million Minutes, a national Catholic youth charity which supports projects helping young people to transform their lives and help them put Catholic Social Teaching into practice.

The Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati Award was established in 2020 as a positive response to the global pandemic, celebrating and recognising amazing

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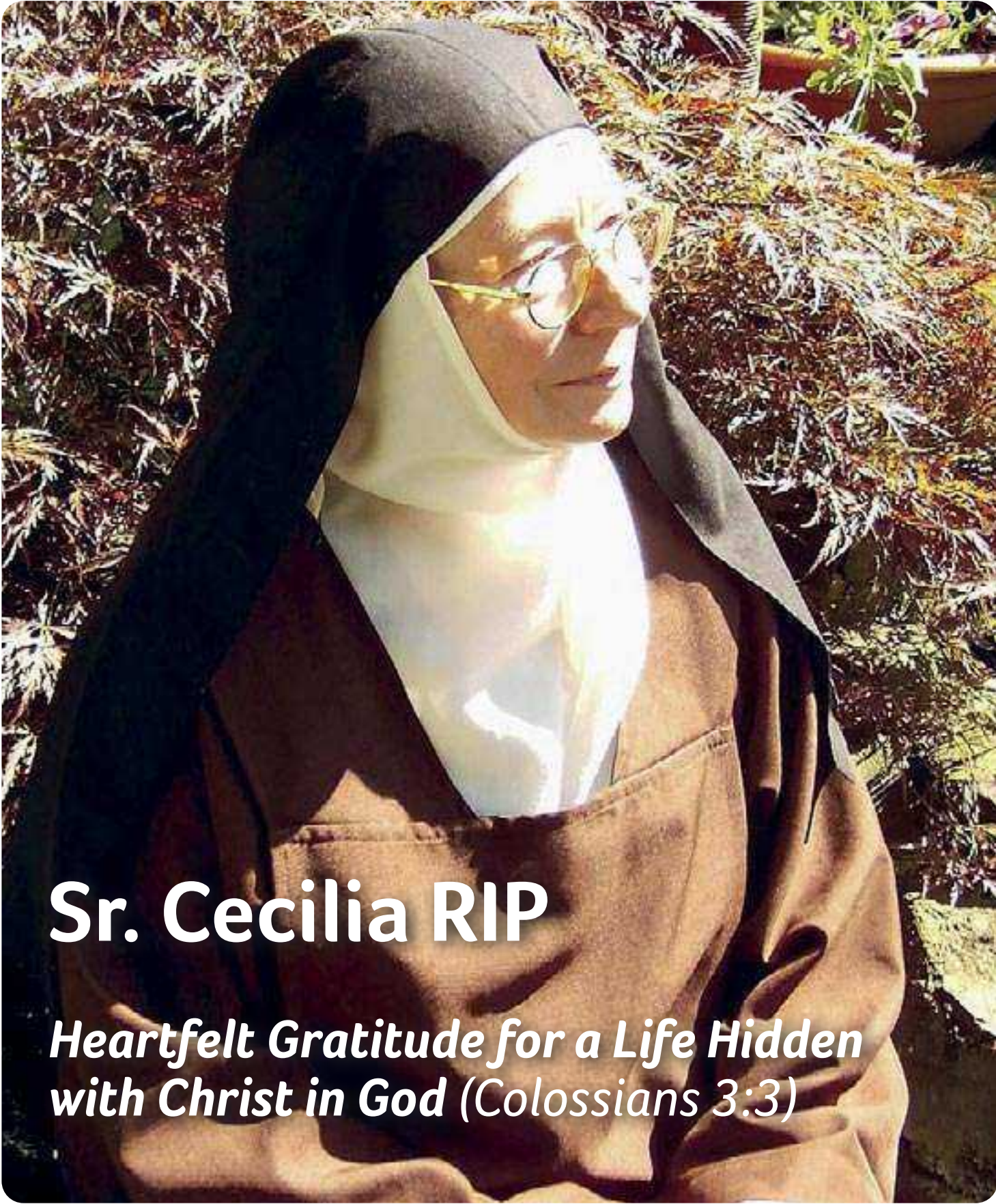
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**O**n Monday 19 October Sister Cecilia Elizabeth Adams, an enclosed Nun from the Carmelite Convent in Preston was called home to our Father's House. Sr. Cecilia came to the Diocese of Lancaster in 2010 and spent the last decade of her contemplative life, praying for souls, for priests, and the needs of the world. I had the wonderful privilege of getting to know Sister Cecilia through our beautiful friendship and learned that 'be-friending' was something that she excelled in. Friendship, a deep intimate friendship with Jesus Christ, and with people she met on her Carmelite journey. After a short illness, Cecilia died a gentle peaceful death in Royal Preston Hospital. There has been a torrent of love and grace shared among the many lives she touched.

Sr. Cecilia formerly Sally Margaret Adams was born on 22nd November 1937, in Bristol. She was baptised into the Anglican Parish Church of St. Peter in Filton. Cecilia's family was Anglican on both sides. Bristol became a target during the Second World War because of the famous Bristol Aircraft Company where fighter planes and other military weapons were manufactured. Cecilia remembered the air raid shelter in their back garden and the bombing of a church in the city centre on Christmas Eve. Whilst Cecilia's father joined the war effort, her mother moved Cecilia and her baby brother, Peter, to the safety of their Grandmother who occupied a large country residence in Bruton with seven bedrooms. Her maternal Grandmother, Beatrice Rose was an eccentric character who played the harp and bore eleven children whom she meticulously disciplined. Her Grandmother's appreciation and love for music were in turn passed on to

Cecilia. Born on the feast of Saint Cecilia patroness of music, in many ways music stamped her whole life. For years she played the organ for the community accompanying the sisters in the Divine Office. Cecilia loved Grove House and her grandmother's menagerie which included dozens of rabbits, a huge Alsatian called William Bruce, and countless fluffy kittens. Here Cecilia developed a huge love for God's creatures great and small but especially cats.

Cecilia graduated from Manchester University with a first-class degree with honours in English Literature. She presented her Thesis on 'Virginia Woolf: a metaphysical novelist'. It was quite literally a 'Come and See'. Andrzej a Polish student and admirer took her to visit the Carmelite Priory in Kensington for Mass and after seeing the procession of friars in their white mantles she was introduced to the Carmelites. She was instructed and received into the Church at Brompton Oratory on the Eve of Pentecost 1963. After graduating and teaching in a Comprehensive School in the heart of Liverpool dockland's she entered the Carmelite Monastery in Wells, Somerset on 11th October 1967. The mysterious figures in their white mantles singing the 'Salve Regina' made an enormous impression on Cecilia. Andrzej bought her a copy of 'The Story of a Soul' an autobiography of Saint Therese which became a life-changing gift.

Cecilia heard God's call and entered Wells Carmel at the age of 27 on 1st October 1965, her parents were very upset at her disappearance to an enclosed life spent behind a grille. When





Wells Carmel closed, the whole community moved to Darlington and there Cecilia lived the majority of her Carmelite Life.

Cecilia was an introvert and the silence and solitude of Carmel suited her natural temperament. She spent several years with permission within the community to live as a hermit. She taught herself New Testament Greek and Hebrew and read a large passage of the bible in French every day.

At 3 pm without fail, she prayed the chaplet of Divine Mercy for sinners and then took a gentle stroll around the garden reciting her rosary which always included a special prayer for the protection of the unborn. Cecilia's natural interiority sometimes caused misunderstanding in the community because she was not practical and was not seen to be hardworking like the rest of the sisters. She loved to study and read and so was given the task of instructing the novices and teaching them about the Carmelite life and sacred scripture a task which she took on with enthusiasm.

Sister Cecilia kept faithful correspondence with two childhood friends from Thornbury Grammar school and continued writing to them right up until her last years. She loved writing letters and notes, it was her way of expressing herself. She wrote some beautiful poems on the indwelling presence of God which she experienced at a profound level. Her loyalty to love and friendship brought great comfort to others. But I was probably the only person to whom she really revealed her truest self. Cecilia suffered from bouts of poor mental health throughout

her Carmelite Life and she was very open about 'It is ok, not to be ok'. I think her experience of the real darkness of depression stamped her with deep empathy for the suffering of others and her inability to make or pass judgments on them. Her self-knowledge of being a sinner in need of God's grace and mercy opened her heart to embrace others especially the weak and those carrying Christ's cross.

She once told me that Christ had a special name for her 'abscondita' which means hidden one. Like Therese, Cecilia didn't go after great things but stuck to the little things, being faithful to prayer, the first in Choir, fostering silence, and humbly serving God with her gift of music. In this time of the pandemic, Cecilia could teach us a great deal about embracing isolation and solitude knowing it can lead us closer to the heart of God. But also that it is only through embracing our darkness and trusting in God alone that we will be victorious.

A quiet gentle soul who suffered and persevered through her own battles with depression and anxiety, she kept the faith and was rewarded with the prize of everlasting life. After renewing her Carmelite vows and fortified by the holy rites of the Catholic church, she heard the Bridegrooms's voice 'Come, my love, my lovely one come, see the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away'. (Song of Songs 2:10-13)

Lisa Opala

**Eternal rest grant unto Sr Cecilia O Lord. And let perpetual light shine on her. May she rest in peace, Amen**

  
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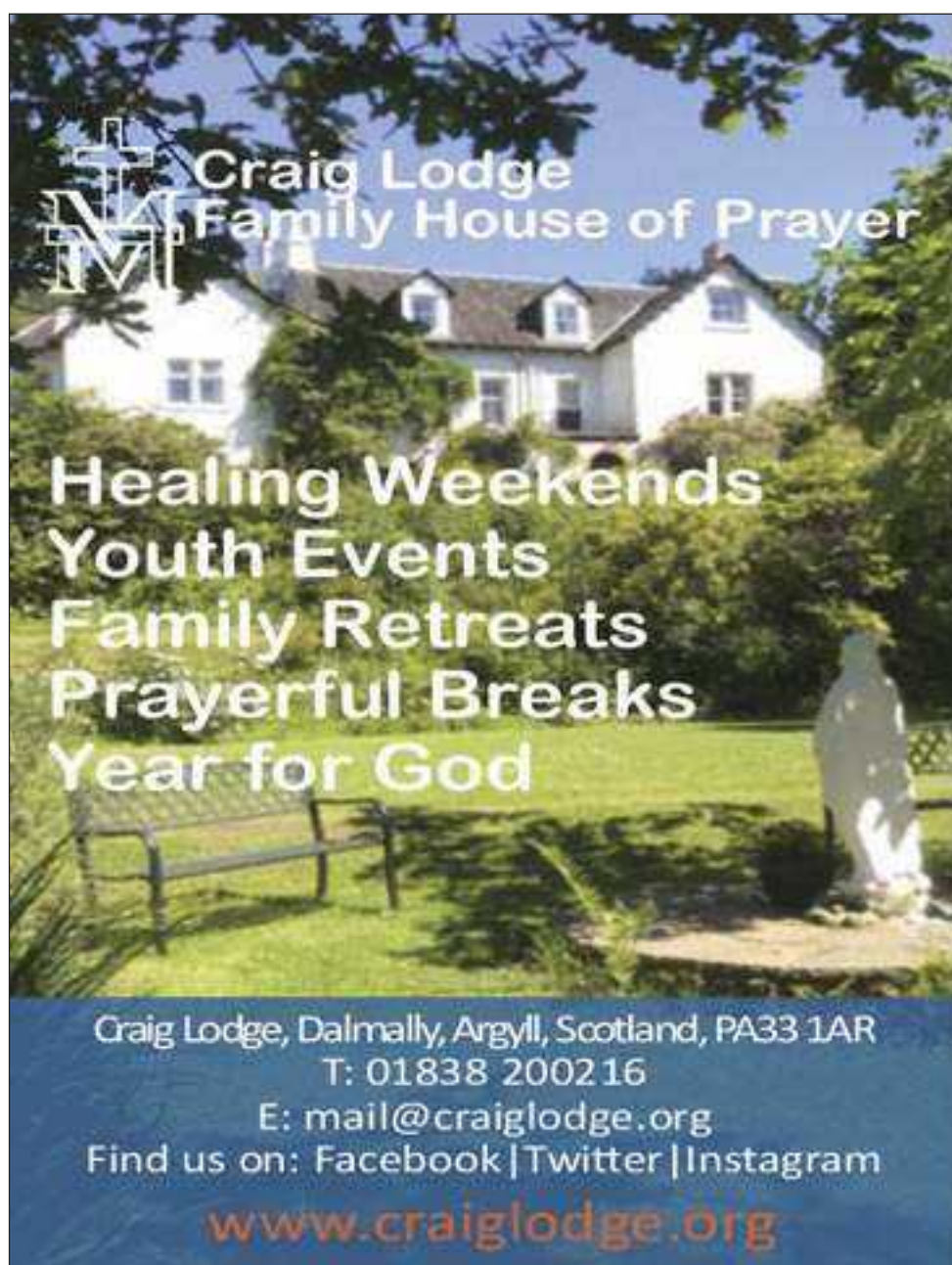
# Hope Through Pain

“

*In this life, Jesus does not ask you to carry the heavy cross with Him, but a small piece of His cross, a piece that consists of human suffering.*

”

St Padre Pio



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**I don't like pain. I recoil from it naturally. And chances are, you don't like pain either. Yet, my pain has been the major catapult in my faith. Before the most painful phase of my life, I had faith. But I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus.**

**So how did hope come out of my pain?**

Well, the most difficult thing was that when I went through my pain, hope seemed to be absent. There was only darkness as far as I could see. Being brought up Catholic, I had experienced God in various ways. It was easy to turn to him when things were going well. But turning to him in suffering seemed impossible for me when I was hurting so much.

**So then, what led me to Him?**

Ultimately, my struggles led me to him and that's why I can confidently say, your pain has a purpose too. It's almost like I had to empty myself out completely – my pride, my plans, my ambitions, my ego, everything 'me' so that he could fill my emptiness with his love and light. I had

to peel away all the layers I had put on. These layers were the distractions and pleasures of the world. I had been so deeply influenced by the world that there wasn't much room for God at all.

There were long days and nights when I felt completely lonely and broken. But God was working through me in ways I did not understand. At the time, I could not fathom how a God who loved me could put me through so much pain. True love comes with sacrifice. Nothing could ever compare to the self-sacrifice of the cross – which he gives freely. The wounds from his Passion remain on the resurrected Jesus. Jesus who was God brought glory out of his human pain. Our wounds and brokenness can also lead to glory of God. In the apostolic letter Salvific Doloris written by Pope St. John Paul II, we see an exploration of the meaning of human suffering. "Down through the centuries and generations it has been seen that in suffering there is concealed a particular power that draws a person interiorly close to Christ, a special grace. (...) It is suffering, more than anything else, which clears the way for the grace which transforms human souls."



“

***I plead with you! Never ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire and never become discouraged. Be not afraid.***

” Pope John Paul II

“

***Even when alone be cheerful, remembering always that you are in the sight of angels.***

” St Therese of Lisieux

“

***Do not lose hope; St Joseph also experienced moments of difficulty, but he never lost faith and was able to overcome them, in the certainty that God never abandons us.***

Pope Francis ”

“

***There is no love without hope, no hope without love, and neither love nor hope without faith.***

St Augustine ”

We see how suffering is not merely a burden to be shunned but it is actually an opportunity to receive grace and grow closer to Jesus. Suffering took me to the depths of my darkness, I realised my limits as a person and my need for my Saviour Jesus. Knowing that God has helped me through each and every suffering and made me stronger has given me the grace to see suffering in a new way. Jesus invites us to deny ourselves and carry our crosses, our suffering. He does this with love, knowing that good can come out of it. It has been a long, tumultuous journey

but I have come to realise that I do not need to understand the reasons behind everything. I do not need to understand my past, or even fully what's happening in my present or the plans for my future. I just need to trust God with it all, the small and the big alike. Trusting God with everything is not an easy endeavour. But knowing that God is all loving along with knowing he is all powerful is very liberating. It means I don't have to waste away time worrying. It means we don't have to waste away the precious minutes and hours of the precious lives we have been given.

God doesn't solve our problems in the ways we might expect. BUT he gives us inner, everlasting peace that can withstand any turbulence.

*“But we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; character; and hope.” (Romans 5:3-4 NIV)*

These bible verses accurately summarise the journey I have been on. My sufferings which initially brought me so much pain have been transformed by God's grace. It has grown into perseverance, character

and then hope. This hope is what I am blessed to be sharing with you today. When I was in the midst of my struggle, I saw no way out. I did not even want to live. But God pulled me through and for that I am so grateful. The least I can do in return is to stay close to him and spread his love far and wide.

So if you're reading this and there's something you're feeling hopeless about, I hope my story reassures and comforts you. God is working it out for good even though we cannot always see or understand it.

Steffi Siby



# Our Lord's Teaching on Prayer

## PART I: The Our Father

**W**hen the disciples saw Jesus praying to His Father, so profound was the communion they witnessed that it made them implore Him to teach them to pray. His answer was to give them the Lord's prayer. St Augustine has said that everything we could possibly wish to ask the Lord is summed up in this prayer. It is a 'summary of the entire Gospel', in the words of Church Father, Tertullian, and to really live it is, according to Pope St John XXIII, 'the height of Christian perfection'. When St Teresa of Avila was asked by her nuns to write about contemplative prayer, it is interesting that she did so by means of a commentary on this most famous of intercessory, vocal prayers, thereby teaching us that this prayer is a way into deep union with God.

### Our Father

So what do we learn from Our Lord's teaching? First Jesus tells us what our relationship is to the One we pray to. He tells us to direct our prayer to the Eternal Father – He who revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush as 'I AM WHO I AM' (Ex. 3.14): eternal Existence, Being

Itself, El Shaddai, the God of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac (Gen 50.24); the One true God, who declared to Jesus 'You are my Son the beloved, with you I am well pleased' (Mk 1.11). What almost defies belief is that Jesus tells us that His Father is also our Father, that our relationship to Him is that of child to parent – though in Jesus' case by nature, and in ours by sheer grace. He reveals this to the Church in the person of Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God' (Jn 20.17). And He says to the disciples 'I do not say I shall pray to the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you' (Jn 16.26-7).

St Teresa of Avila was simply bowled over by this revelation:

*'You fill our hands ... O Son of God, and my Lord! How much You give us with Your first word! ... You give in the name of Your Father all that He can give us for You desire that He should regard us as His children, and Your word cannot fail. You oblige Him to fulfil it, which is no small charge. Being our Father, He has to put up with us, however grave may be our offences; if we return to Him, like the prodigal son, He*

*has to pardon us; has to console us in our trials, has to sustain us in a manner fitting such a Father, Who must be better than any earthly father, because in Him nothing less than the perfection of goodness can be found; and besides all this, He must make us participators and co-heirs with You' (Way of Perfection, 29.2).*

Implied in this disclosure of 'Who God is for us' is the attitude of filial trust, confidence and reverence that we should have towards Him. We see this so clearly in St Thérèse of Lisieux, who dared to speak of sitting on God's lap, and who called Him 'Papa, le bon Dieu', yet with no diminution of respect. Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection goes so far as to speak of being nursed at the bosom of God.

### 'Who art in heaven...'

Jesus continues by telling us where we are to look for Him. He is in the heavens – high above us, reigning in splendour in the supernatural realm. And yet He is close – as Jesus says elsewhere 'The Kingdom of heaven is near' (Mt 3.2), and – what is more – 'the Kingdom of Heaven is within you' (Lk 17.21). As St Teresa teaches:

*'However quietly we speak, He is so near that He will hear us: we need no wings to go in search of Him but have only to find a place where we can be alone and look upon Him present within us' (Way of Perfection, 28.2).*

### Hallowed be Your Name

May God's name be held holy. This is tantamount to saying 'May all people revere and honour You as God. May all believe. Let all be saved. May I praise and magnify You here on earth as You deserve.' 'In Heaven' St Teresa tells us we will experience 'a great interior satisfaction when we see that all are hallowing and praising the Lord and blessing His Name' (WP 30.6). That the Father should receive the glory due to Him was the intention closest to Jesus' heart: 'Father! Glorify Your name' (Jn 12.28).

### Thy Kingdom Come

May God's reign of truth, justice and peace, mercy and righteousness prevail everywhere. We pray for the hastening of the coming of the new heavens and the new earth, the decisive defeat of all forms of evil and oppression throughout the world. We pray for this Kingdom to come in our own hearts especially.

### Thy Will be done on Earth as in Heaven

When Jesus teaches us to pray that God's will may be done we are in effect praying for the triumph of goodness, the enactment of good laws, the reign of peace. St Augustine teaches that here we also pray for ourselves – that we will not resist God's will. We pray that

the Holy Spirit will inspire us, that we will recognise which inspirations come from Him and be given the strength to correspond with grace.

Jesus Himself uttered this prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, asking the Father to remove the chalice of suffering 'yet not my will, but Thine be done' (Lk 22.42). It is a prayer He must (in His humanity) have learnt from His Mother, Mary, who began her life mission – that would both fill her with grace, and pierce her heart with sorrows – with the words 'I am the Lord's servant. Let it be done to me according to Thy Word' (Lk 1.38). We ask that the divine will may take total possession of us, that He may speak and think, pray and act in us.

St Teresa tells us we must not be surprised if the lot marked out for us as servants of God is the Cross, since this is what God gave His own beloved Son, and since it is suffering that He seems to unerringly mete out to His saints. Indeed, she says the measure of our love for God is our willingness to carry a large Cross or a small one. 'What better sign of friendship is there than for Him to give you what He gave Himself?' (Way of Perfection, ch 17).

*'Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? No, it is for this purpose that I have come to this hour.'* Jesus rises from His anguish stepping above it to ask the Father, 'Father glorify Your Name', to which the Father responds, 'I will glorify it' (Jn 12.27). The Cross – and Christ's willing acceptance of it for our salvation – is the means by which God is glorified.

### Give us this day our daily bread

In this petition we ask for our material bread (at the lowest level), and we also ask God to feed our mind and spirit with the Scriptures, the Word of God (His teaching for us for today), and with the supernatural food of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist. St Teresa of Avila made it her practice at Holy Communion to welcome our Lord into her heart, as if into her house. She assures us 'He will work miracles when He is within us, if we have faith'. 'He will give us what we ask of Him since He is in our house' (WP 34.9).

Jesus says after evangelising the Samaritan woman at the well 'My food is to do the will of the Father' (Jn 4.34). In this we see that doing the work of God, discerning and then obeying His will is another type of nourishment for which we ask in this petition.

### Forgive us our sins and we forgive those who sin against us

These two petitions form our covenant with God – He forgives us, if and when we forgive others. 'Should you not have shown

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pity to your fellow servant, even as I showed pity to you?’ asks the King of the servant whose debts he has written off (Mt 18.33). As evangelist J. John said in an interview ‘not to forgive is to destroy the bridge over which we ourselves must walk’.

St Teresa says that real contemplatives ‘pay little attention to things which pass away’. Rather they see persecutions as favours from God, and an opportunity to offer Him something back. They know they have been forgiven much, and therefore readily forgive others.

*‘I cannot believe that a soul which has approached so nearly to Mercy Itself, and has learned to know itself and the greatness of God’s pardon, will not immediately and readily forgive, and be mollified and remain on good terms with a person who has done it wrong ... It is*

*glad that the occasion presents itself for showing Him some love in return’ (WP, 36.12).*

**And lead us not into temptation...**  
*‘Lord, knowing my weakness, don’t let me be tested beyond my strength. Give me the grace to overcome temptation and don’t let me give in to it’. In this way temptations can make us stronger.*

**But deliver us from evil...**  
St Mariam of Jesus Crucified prayed: *‘From all evil, from all illusion, from all danger preserve us’.* The battle we are engaged in is a very real one, and the enemy of our soul wishes to destroy us. We ask for protection for ourselves, for the needy, the Church, and the whole world.

*by Dolgellau Carmel, Wales  
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# Making a Difference!

**O**rlagh, Holly and Tegan of the Preston Impact Group have certainly grown in confidence and social awareness since being part of the EmpoweHer project and Youth Worker Terry Mattinson was particularly impressed by the trios endeavours over Christmas.

The young girls made up male and female starter packs for homeless people living on the streets in Preston. They planned how to buy all the goods from socks,

undergarments, period packs, hand gel and other essential items. They planned all of the spending of the Social Action project money and organised shopping trips and liaison with the Foxton Centre in Preston all on their own initiative.

Terry couldn’t be more delighted with their efforts and said *“the girls have shown that they can make a real difference and the Impact Group is immensely proud of them.”*



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# High School in Preston Getting Back to Basics

**C**ovid-19 has left us all with a sense of uncertainty and confusion. Losing our sense of purpose without the daily norms of school life had become commonplace for staff and students alike during lockdown. We aimed tirelessly to reach out via social media and online learning but something had shifted. As leaders we searched for simple and effective solutions to this unprecedented time, how could we remind our community of our core vision and values as we opened our doors to all students in September? It turns out that the answer lay in our Catholic faith.

The Jesuit Way of living has been inspirational for us in our aim to welcome our community back with a new sense of hope. What is the mission of Christ the King Catholic High School? This became a whole new question in these strange times! We value our school as an environment that is a safe haven for many, that has teaching and learning at its core fully underpinned by our Catholic faith. We wanted to make sure our students knew that we were thrilled to have them back in classrooms and for our Year 7 students that they were so very welcome. We launched a new rewards system that is wholly rooted in mission and so 'The CTK Way' was born.

'The CTK way' is an acronym for our school's values, it stems from the principals of the Jesuit Way and of

Ignatius living. We want our students to be, Team Players, House Proud, Engaged, Conscious, Truthful, Kind, Worship, Academic, Young Leaders.

**Team Players**, students are rewarded for working together as a team, playing their part and supporting those who need a helping hand. House Proud, at Christ the King Catholic High School we have a unique House system and there are endless opportunities to contribute to the pastoral system. Engaged, teaching and learning is our bread and butter and we expect students to be engaged in their lessons, through this they are reminded of the basics such as bringing equipment and punctuality but they are also rewarded for active participation in lessons and wider school life.

**Conscious**, in launching the initiative the Student Council were lucky enough to secure funding from the Queen's Commonwealth Trust to purchase reusable water bottles for all, encouraging our students to abandon the use of single use plastic, being conscious of the environment and putting Pope Francis' Laudato Si guidance into practice.

**Truthful**, students are rewarded for expressing their opinions, we take part in UK Parliament Week and students are encouraged to engage with a system of democracy by voting for our Student Council.



**Kind**, kindness is at the core of the way we respect one another at Christ the King Catholic High School, we reward students for simple acts of kindness especially during these challenging time.

**Worship**, students pray together daily and have the opportunity to take part in Mass, we think witness to Christ is vital to our student's well-being and creates a healthy approach to school life.

**Academic**, we wanted to revitalise the love for learning, students earn rewards for attainment.

**Young Leaders**, students are encouraged to display leadership skills, these are rewarded at classroom level and for whole school participation in clubs such as sport, Youth SVP and Student Council. Students can monitor how they are living out The CTK Way through Class Charts, our new online merit system. The CTK Way is simply a way of being, our community is like home again and students and staff are settling in to this new way of living and learning. We pray for a return to normality soon but 'The CTK Way' is here to stay.

*Christ the King High School, Preston*

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