

NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENTARY



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

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Mary may disappear... from the poor who she's called to bring hope and liberation to!

Each Church has a celebration or 'birth' day when it remembers its Patron Saint.

Here at the cathedral Mary is our Patron and her message of raising up the poor and lowly is sung each day at Evensong.

That song is being sung less and less across the country as congregations dwindle and some close. Having ministered to a large and deprived post war estate for seven years in South East Hampshire, it's easy to see identify the loss of community through the withdrawal of pubs, clubs, shops and churches. Many post-war church buildings are reaching the end of the life and it's difficult to attract clergy to serve in places such as Fareham where one estate was known as 'Little Beirut' with its drugs, poor housing and loneliness. Yet this is where Mary comes from and the Church risks neglecting the very people she highlights in the Magnificat.

Bishop Philip North's passion is for making Mary's magnificent message known and is our preacher for this year's Patronal. He speaks from the heart and raises the message of the poor in a way that isn't often heard. At August's New Wine gathering in Somerset Philip spoke

The Church of England is "*complicit in the abandonment of the poor...*" "*The simple and hard truth is that, in the poorest parts of the country, we are withdrawing preachers. We are seeing the slow and steady withdrawal of church life from those communities where the*

poorest people in our nation live." Church planting is creating "*white middle-class graduate Church for white middle-class graduates."*

As a Cathedral that is called to reach out to some of the most affluent and most deprived communities in the North of England, Bishop Philip's presence and sermon create a great opportunity to think how we can proclaim and support Mary's message to the poor (spiritually and physically) in the Diocese whether they're behind grills on their windows in a tower block on The Wirral or behind electric gates in Wilmslow! Mary's message is for all!

Come and hear Philip on Sunday 17 September at 11am – a Christian who invited me to know of Mary's liberating message, twenty years ago and who invites you to engage with her mission of hope today. today

Canon Jeremy Dussek

Lord Bourne Visits LEGO

We were fortunate to welcome Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth to the cathedral in late July.

Lord Bourne, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Faith enjoyed a tour of the cathedral with both the Dean and Vice Dean - stopping momentarily to take in Chester Cathedral in LEGO - where he also bought five bricks - ably assisted by LEGO volunteer Richard Moore.



Cathedral Chorister's Tour

In May & June, the cathedral choristers did a short tour in the north of England. This is the first time just boys and girls choirs have toured together, spending five nights based in Kirkby Stephen on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales.

The tour was a mixture of rehearsing, singing for services and enjoying their time together - as well as singing at three services there was time to visit Coniston, Hadrian's Wall, Fountains Abbey and the Beamish Open Air Museum – with a quick stop at the Angel of the North.

Being volunteer helpers (we're former choir parents who help with the Choir Support Group) rather than cathedral staff provides an interesting perspective on the work and fun of a choir tour. The choir touring provide excellent ambassadors for Chester Cathedral. In five days the choristers sang, dined, socialised, visited and travelled as a group of 25 youngsters whose behaviour was excellent, earning compliments from many of the people we met .



The support of the choristers' parents was particularly evident at the services - referred to as the 'supporters club' by the Dean of Carlisle Cathedral. The choir relies on the support and commitment of the choristers' parents and families and being a parent to one (or often more) chorister is a big commitment. Having the congregations at the services joined by parents and families of choristers is a strong indication of commitment but also of how proud we are to be part of the remarkable work of the choir and the cathedral.



There's a lot of work making sure the choristers have the right music (and their cassocks) for the services. Helping with that included the privilege of sitting in on the rehearsals which precede each service. It should come as no surprise that the high standard of music is the result of the hard work and skill of the music staff in preparing themselves and the choristers for each service. Watching the choir under the firm but gentle direction of Mr Rushforth and seeing how the rehearsal warms up the voices, polishes the pieces and brings the choir together, offers a real insight into how the choir achieves the standards which gets it such a deserved reputation..

The clergy in both Carlisle and Durham cathedrals were impressed with the Chester choirs. While choir tours usually involve singing in Cathedrals and other prestigious venues, Philip Rushforth, Chester's Director of Music, arranged for the choir to sing for the Sunday morning Eucharist at the Parish Church in Kirkby Stephen – a beautiful building known as the Cathedral of the Dales. The Parish provided a lunch for the choristers and the congregation afterwards and it was clear from conversations with parishioners that they had been moved by the music and really appreciated the choir's visit.

Of course, tours don't happen without the hard work of planning and preparation. Once the dates are set for the choir to sing, there needs to be accommodation identified and booked, meals sorted and visits arranged. With a group of lively youngsters, every minute needs to be planned so that they enjoy themselves – and can still give their best in the choir stalls.

Katy & Francis Coxhead