

Attendance and Collection

19th Jan Attendance 59 Collection £177.00

26th Jan Attendance 63 Collection £189.00

Parishioners Who are Unwell If you would like the parish to pray for someone, please notify Father Sony on 01772 865229 for inclusion in the Bidding Prayers or newsletter.

Feast Days Mon - St. Scholastica Tues – OUR LADY OF LOURDES (World Day for the Sick)
Fri – STS. CYRIL & METHODIUS

Cycle of Prayer The Sick and Those who care for them – World Day for the Sick -11th February

Jubilee Pilgrimage to Walsingham

Dear brothers and sisters,

In this Jubilee Year our annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham, the National Shrine to Our Blessed Lady, will take place 20-24 October 2025. I invite you to join me! A Jubilee Year is a moment of grace in the life of the Church. The practice finds its roots in the Old Testament covenant made between God and his people, Israel. It was a time of redemption, a moment when land and property were returned to their original owners and slaves were set free (Leviticus 25). In Luke's Gospel it is no small thing that Jesus' first public proclamation, which took place in the Synagogue in Nazareth, recalls the prophetic words of Isaiah with the promise of a "year of favour from the Lord" (Is 61:1-2).

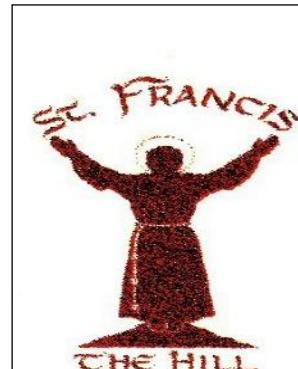
This year of favour, this Jubilee Year, will find the Church proclaiming the Gospel afresh, proclaiming liberty from the darkness of sin and healing, both physical and spiritual, for those who are oppressed (Lk 4:18-19). Our pilgrimage to Walsingham is therefore an excellent way to mark this time of grace, both as a diocese and individually.

Some of you are familiar with Walsingham. For others, it will be your first visit. In the Middle Ages, the Shrine was one of the great ancient Marian places of pilgrimage in the whole of Christendom. It is known as England's very own Nazareth and is a place where the incarnation of Jesus is particularly remembered. Therefore, for the modern pilgrim, it is a place for all who would rejoice with Mary at 'the great joy of the Annunciation.' Like Lourdes in France, it is a place of reconciliation, conversion, peace and healing.

The all-inclusive cost is £475.00-£550.00 (dependent on accommodation type). Coach collection/drop-off will take place in Workington, Carlisle, Penrith, Lancaster and Preston. Fr Billing is the Rector and is a wonderful host for us, coming as we do from his home Diocese. He is keen to open the treasure of Walsingham to pilgrims who have never been before as well as those of us who are regular pilgrims. It is also an opportunity to support him in his national role.

For more information and booking details contact the pilgrimage organiser Deacon Charlie Conner on 07895 742 732 or email charlie.conner@lrdc.org.uk

The places will be limited, so please book in good time. +Rt Rev Paul Swarbrick Bishop of Lancaster



St Francis Hill Chapel Parish Newsletter

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Parish Safeguarding Representative –Maria Peel

**Sunday 9th February 2025
5th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**Readings – Year C
Mass 10.30am**

Parish Mission Statement

Our Parish, guided by the example of our patron St Francis of Assisi, seeks to be a welcoming Catholic Community by living, sharing and growing in faith. We strive to deepen our own relationship with Christ and meet the needs of others.

Mass intention is for Joan Gornall

We pray for all who are unwell in our parish especially

Bill Bamber, Shirley Walker & Frank Morris

We remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time especially

Joan Marshall Gornall

Tea and Coffee will be served after Sunday Mass.

Newsletter Roof Restoration Project Number 11

I am pleased to report that the work to repair the church roof is running to schedule and should be completed by the end of March. We have yet to confirm a date when Bishop Paul will be able to visit and officiate at a special rededication mass but the PPC recently agreed that it would be more appropriate to wait until the week after Easter when we could celebrate without any of the restrictions a service during Lent would impose. Once details have been finalised a further announcement will be made. I attach below a copy of an article I have written for the Catholic Voice newspaper. I am not sure when, or if, it will be published but I think it important that you see it first.

Restoration of the Historic Church of St Francis, Hill Chapel,
Goosnargh

The historic Grade 2 listed St Francis Church, Hill Chapel, Goosnargh is currently undergoing a major restoration project. The church is temporarily closed, and Sunday mass is being celebrated in the adjacent school hall. Hill Chapel has huge historical significance – it was built at a time when the penal laws in England imposed severe restrictions on Catholics limiting their ability to meet and worship together. However, the Lancashire Catholics were determined to continue to attend mass and, despite a significant risk to their lives and well-being, organised several 'safe houses' where mass could be celebrated in secret. One such house is now the Hill Chapel presbytery, where Blessed George Beesley was born in 1562. After training for the priesthood in Europe, George Beesley returned to England in disguise to celebrate mass and the sacraments. He was subsequently captured by agents of the Crown and executed as a priest in London in 1591. In the early 18th century, the Franciscan Order considered it to be safe enough to build a small chapel two miles outside the village of Goosnargh, on high ground known as The Hill. The chapel was designed to resemble a barn and was sited well away from main community. It was opened in 1755 - with several additions being added in the 19th century.

In 2009 major work was conducted to strengthen the roof and replace the roof slates. Unfortunately, ten years later in 2019, the ceiling began to crack and become badly deflected. On examination it was discovered that the roof trusses had failed. and urgent action had to be taken to prop up the roof to make it safe. Slates began to fall to the ground and the asbestos cement ceiling to crumble. Dust fell on to the pews and new cracks were appearing all the time. Early in 2024 the parish property group appointed Structural Engineers and a Conservation Architect to assess the cost of making the roof and ceiling safe and to draw up plans and costings for a major restoration project to be undertaken. Work began in October 2024 to remove and replace the old asbestos ceiling, undertake the major structural repair and strengthening of the roof, replace the existing Brazilian roof slates with top quality English slates, rewire the church, install a new eco-friendly lighting scheme, and redecorate the whole of the building.

It was clear from the start of the project that costs were going to be extremely high. The parish is very grateful to have received large grants, amounting in total to £131,000 from the Albert Gubay Foundation, the National Churches Trust, the Knights of St Columba and from Goosnargh Parish Council. Parish fund raising events during the last year, including concerts, an Open Gardens Day, sponsored events, raffles, parish socials and personal donations have raised an additional £54,000 towards the project. A great achievement by a small parish community. The project is due to take twenty-five weeks to complete and, at the time of writing, is in its seventeenth week. It is schedule to be completed by the end of March 2025, when the parish priest, Fr Sony Joseph, hopes to invite Bishop Paul Swarbrick to officiate at a rededication mass which will probably take place towards the end of April.

Mike Bryan Property Group Chair