



A COMMUNITY FUND RAISING  
APPEAL TO RESTORE THE CHURCH  
OF OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA  
& ST MICHAEL WORKINGTON

## MY PLEA TO YOU

As the Parish Priest of the Parish of Christ the Good Shepherd I am asking for your help in securing the future of the church of Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Michael so that we can hand on this precious gift to our children and generations to come. The church is in need of urgent, large-scale investment to repair/restore it to its former outstanding condition.

The Workington Stella Maris Project Restoration Appeal is an important and challenging opportunity to safeguard this exceptional historic building. The goal of the appeal is to ensure what makes the Parish of Christ the Good Shepherd special today will continue to fulfil the work of Jesus Christ.

## A BIT OF HISTORY

The Catholic Church is rooted deeply in Workington, dating back to the early 19th century.

Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Michael was designed by Edward Welby Pugin, son of Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, the English designer, author and one of the most influential proponents of Gothic revival architecture.

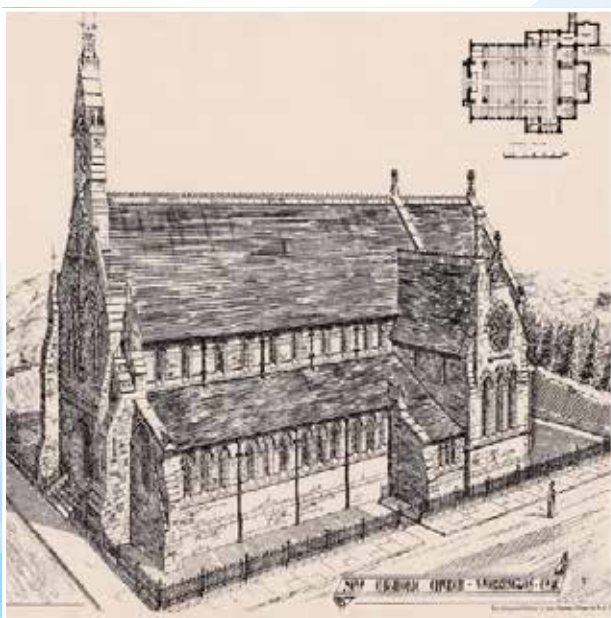
Abbot Cuthbert Clifton OSB, Parish Priest from 1844 to 1891, had the foresight and commitment to build the church to meet the needs of the increasing Catholic community which had swelled significantly with an influx of Irish immigrants. The foundation stone was laid on 9 October 1873. Over the next three years, the tenacity, passion and generosity of the clergy and laity resulted in completion of this magnificent church. It is an outstanding example of Early English Gothic architecture, incorporating remarkable construction and engineering techniques. Built by Hugh Gates of Liverpool, it cost £10,000. The church was formally opened on 21 September 1876 and officially registered as a place of worship on 11 October the same year, replacing the Mission Chapel of 1813. Out of those very humble beginnings, the parish grew. Abbot Clifton died on 5 December 1891 and was buried in Banklands graveyard. Today a Celtic cross stands at the entrance to the church grounds in remembrance of him. The later work of Father Clement Standish OSB was instrumental in adding many fine internal features. Amongst them are intricately detailed altars, numerous superb stained glass windows, unique carved furniture and misericords, 15th century

alabaster reliefs salvaged from the ruins of Jervaulx Abbey and many more artefacts. He also cleared the debt enabling the church to be consecrated in 1921.

This church has served us well for almost 150 years and spiritually charts the history of the Catholic faith in Workington. It was and remains a significant part of the town's heritage. Nothing as magnificent as Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Michael has been built in this area since the foundation stone was laid.

It is dedicated to worship and sharing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This happens in many ways, all of which help form the Catholic faith; Mass, Baptisms, First Holy Communions, Confirmations, Weddings, Funerals and social events for the wider community. It is also open to visitors every day for prayer, reflection, contemplation and discovery.

I am inviting you to pause and give thanks for this unique place. It is inconceivable that we could lose it. We need to preserve it, respecting those who preceded us. They gave so much in times of great hardship. We also need to consider those who follow us and what they will inherit as they carry out the task of promoting the teachings of Jesus. I am calling on you to continue to build on our blessings and prepare for the future.



## WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR A BUILDING RESTORATION APPEAL?

The church of Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Michael is a Grade II listed building of exceptional historic and architectural interest. The listed status places a huge obligation on the parish of Christ the Good Shepherd to restore and maintain it to the highest possible standard. Despite on going investment, the building is deteriorating at a rapid pace. That, coupled with increasing costs means we are in danger of losing the battle to preserve the church for this and future generations.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Since 2016, the north transept roof, the lower and upper roof on the south side of the church have been replaced at a cost of £200,000.

Health and safety concerns meant that repair to the main driveway and path between the church and Priory had to be carried out at a cost of £17,000.

Energy efficient boilers, radiators and lighting have been installed at a cost of £137,000.

Apart from a government grant of £99,000, the remaining expenditure of £255,000 has been met from rapidly diminishing parish reserves.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

A survey by Mrs Elaine Blackett-Ord, an accredited conservation architect, has identified significant structural problems that need urgent repair. Her report clearly indicates what needs to be done. It confirms we must take immediate hold of the situation and not allow the building to deteriorate any further. The survey identifies distressing matters relating to structural aspects, many of which are hardly noticeable to the naked eye. The condition of the building is of such concern that English Heritage has included it on the national 'At Risk' register.

The next phase of work will be on the east end and south side of the church. There are major structural problems at both locations. Masonry continues to decay,

leaving valuable stained glass windows at serious risk. Preservation of the stained glass window above the Lady Altar alone will cost in the region of £52,000 as the whole window must be carefully removed and all the intricate stonework replaced. There are similar problems with the Sacred Heart Altar windows, which will cost in the region of £62,000.

Repairs to the north and south Sanctuary walls, stonework and glazing will cost in the region of £140,000. There is a structural movement at the south Transept resulting in an outward lean and bulging, requiring tying together of inner and outer walls. This will mean removal of the whole rose window. In addition, the roof needs to be repaired. This area has been cordoned off since 2016 for reasons of safety. The cost of repair will be in the region of £245,000.

The total cost of repair to the east end and south Transept will be in the region of half a million pounds. Other structural repairs will incur significant additional expenditure. Repairs to the Baptistry alone will cost £195,000.

On top of that, the organ needs to be repaired and there is a strong case for internal decoration of the church.

Raising the money to repair the church is a formidable task but with your goodwill and generosity we can certainly get those urgent and essential repairs underway.



*Lady Altar window showing damage to tracery with potential loss of stained glass. Similar problems at the Sacred Heart Altar and rose window on south Transept*

## WHY CAN'T THE PARISH COVER THE COST OF THE WORK?

We simply don't have the finances to carry out the work.

The offertory procession of bread, wine and collection at Mass is an integral part of the liturgy. The collection being the primary means by which the parish receives financial support from parishioners.

Weekly average giving is in the region of £1,600, equating to about £4 per Mass attendee. Less than the cost of a bottle of wine and about the price of a pint of beer.

Your contribution is your way of giving a portion of your income back to God for use by His church. By contributing we show our children, family and friends our values and what is important to us. It helps to pay for heating, lighting, water rates, Council tax, salaries, repairs and general maintenance, our voluntary aided status schools and sundry expenses.

As the number of parishioners who contribute financially to the parish is decreasing, there is a corresponding reduction in income which is further eroded by inflation and increasing costs.

Meanwhile the bills keep coming in.

Without rental income from parish properties, legacies and personal gifts, the parish would run an annual deficit, a situation that is not sustainable. Good housekeeping requires us to keep some money in reserve.





## CAN THE PARISH GET FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE DIOCESE OR ELSEWHERE FOR THE PROJECT?

The Lancaster Diocese does not have the finances to help us. We are responsible for maintaining our churches and other parish buildings.

We are also obliged to pay an annual levy to the Diocese to support centrally provided services.

We also incur necessary expenditure as we seek the best possible professional advice and obtain surveys and reports before making important decisions about repairs to all parish property.

We continue to seek a major funder to enable work to be carried out. Applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to date have been unsuccessful although we will continue to pursue this potential source of funding, there is no guarantee of success.

We are also seeking financial support from other grant-giving organisations but there is an increasing demand on diminishing resources. Applications are complex and take time to prepare before submission, added to which, decisions by the grant-making organisations are often slow.

Time is not on our side.

## HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED IN THE APPEAL TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE PROJECT?

I am very keen for you to become involved and your response to this appeal will determine what we can afford to do.

Your financial support is crucial. Without it there is a danger that the church will be lost to future generations. It also demonstrates to external funders that we are committed to preserving the church and not simply relying on others to provide the finance.

Without your involvement and commitment, the appeal will not succeed, the parish will be spiritually poorer and we will begin to manage the decline of this beautiful church.

## HOW CAN I MAKE MY VIEWS KNOWN?

I am very keen to hear your views. You can contact me at the Priory:

- Email: [info@workingtoncatholicchurch.co.uk](mailto:info@workingtoncatholicchurch.co.uk)
- Through the Workington Stella Maris Project website: [www.stellamarisproject.co.uk](http://www.stellamarisproject.co.uk)

## WHAT ABOUT OTHER CHURCHES AND BUILDINGS IN THE PARISH OF CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD?

I want to reassure you that whilst the focus of this appeal is on Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Michael, the other churches and buildings in the parish are essential to help us to spread the Good News. I will not be distracted from their needs.

We have invested significantly in all properties and will continue to do so as we seek your assistance to make this restoration appeal successful to restore the church of Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Michael.



## HOW CAN I DONATE TO THE APPEAL?

Your donation should be made voluntarily and in line with what you can afford to give:

‘Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.’ 2 Corinthians 9:7

By contributing, the burden is shared and you can take satisfaction in having both personal and direct responsibility for helping make the appeal a success. You can donate via the following means:

- Commit to regular giving
- Increase your current regular giving
- Donate of a sum of money
- Sponsor part of the renovation
- Include a legacy in your Will (Contact the parish office for the wording)
- Offer shares or other valuable assets

If you want all, or any, of your donation to be specifically for the Workington Stella Maris Project Appeal, please make a suitable endorsement on your envelope, document or gift.

If you make a payment by cheque, please make it payable to the Parish of Christ the Good Shepherd and include Workington Stella Maris Project on the reverse or on an accompanying note.

Payment by Standing Order should be made to the Parish of Christ the Good Shepherd.

Forms are available in the parish office.

You can also donate via ‘Just Giving’ on the Workington Stella Maris website – [www.stellamarisproject.co.uk](http://www.stellamarisproject.co.uk),

Click onto ‘Donations’, or visit the parish website – [www.workingtoncatholicchurch.co.uk](http://www.workingtoncatholicchurch.co.uk) then click on ‘Workington Stella Maris Project’. Again select ‘Donations’. Please ensure your gift is endorsed:

**Workington Stella Maris Project.**

## HOW YOUR GIFT AID CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE:

If you are a tax payer, please consider gift aiding your donation. All money given through Gift Aid means your donation will be worth 25% more to us at no extra cost to you.

### **WEEKLY CONTRIBUTION**

**£1** With Gift Aid we receive £1.25, this equals £65 per year

**£5** With Gift Aid we receive £6.25, this equals £325 per year

**£10** With Gift Aid we receive £12.50, this equals £650 per year

**£15** With Gift Aid we receive £13.75, this equals £975 per year

**£20** with Gift Aid we receive £25.00, this equals £1,300 per year

**£25** With Gift Aid we receive £26.25, this equals £1,625 per year

**£50** With Gift Aid we receive £62.50, this equals £3,250 per year

We also welcome offers of in-kind services or skills to help us reduce the costs of our restoration project. What you give is confidential.

## HOW WILL I KNOW HOW THE APPEAL IS PROGRESSING?

This appeal is led by members of the Workington Stella Maris Project Group. I want to thank them and members of our parish who give their time and talent to enable it to function successfully. I will ensure that regular progress reports will be made via the Workington Stella Maris Project website, the parish web-site, the parish weekly newsletter and the Workington Stella Maris Project information board in the church.

In 2021 we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the consecration of the church.

In 2023 we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the church.

In 2026 we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the church.

These dates are significant in the history of the church of Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Michael. It would be fitting if we could mark each of those milestones with evidence that the fund raising appeal is successful.

## HELP MAKE THIS APPEAL SUCCESSFUL

I am reaching out to you, the entire parish and the wider community, to ensure that this marvellous landmark church that holds a special place in local religious and social history, remains central to the spiritual growth and renewal for generations to come.

May God lead you as you consider what you can do to help make this appeal successful before it is too late.

**We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there "is" such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.'** - Martin Luther King Jr

Kindly consider my plea and grasp this wonderful opportunity, so that we never need to explain why we allowed the church of Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Michael to deteriorate and become a liability rather than the priceless asset it is.

**Canon John Watson**

*Parish Priest Christ the Good Shepherd*

## A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP PAUL SWARBRICK

In 2010 I was fortunate to be appointed Parish Priest of Our Lady Star of the Sea and St. Michael, Workington. Very quickly I became aware of the high quality of this historic church, and its relevance not just for the Catholic community but for the broader population and indeed the visitors who take the time and trouble to explore West Cumbria.

During my seven happy years in residence it became increasingly obvious that much work was needed to repair and maintain the building and its beautiful interior. I am pleased to say that a small band of volunteers was willing to become actively engaged in this demanding task. Primarily safeguarding the church's use as a place of Catholic worship, but also making welcome the increasing number of visitors took a considerable amount of my time. It was a project I was more than willing to embrace.

In April 2018 I found myself appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Lancaster. This meant my taking leave of Workington but not abandoning it. It remains a parish within my area. I am more than happy to lend whatever support I can to the on-going work of promoting fund-raising for the church. I have every confidence that my successor, Canon John Watson, together with his enthusiastic team of supporters, will strive to make the church better known and loved.

I commend this project to you, and have great hope that Our Lady Star of the Sea and St. Michael's will for generations to come be a fitting place for Catholic worship as well as being a place where people of all faiths and none will find beauty and peace for those who seek them in our hectic world. With my prayers and blessing.

**Paul Swarbrick**  
*Bishop of Lancaster*



**This booklet has been produced through the generosity of a parishioner of Christ the Good Shepherd. For further information call 01900 602114 or [www.workingtoncatholicchurch.co.uk](http://www.workingtoncatholicchurch.co.uk)**