

HOPE IN THE FUTURE DEANERY WALK

Saturday, June 22 saw the first Hope in the Future Deanery walk from Stonyhurst along the Tolkien Trail. Starting with a prayer at the statue of Our Lady, 46 people from 11 St John Southworth Deanery parishes skirted the college grounds and through the fields to the Hodder. We regrouped frequently to learn about the features of our surroundings and their Tolkien links. We picnicked on the stretch of river before Cromwell's Bridge which is named after Oliver Cromwell who marched his parliamentary army over it on their way from Gisburn to where they fought the King's men in the Battle of Preston in 1648. After a short stretch of road we rejoined the river and walked on to where the Hodder and then the Calder join the Ribble. A few weeks ago, an osprey was spotted fishing near here. Like us it needed a lunch break on its journey north to the Lake District. We had to be content with a heron, a truly magnificent bird none the less.

As we walked that final stretch of river back to Stonyhurst we reflected that it wasn't the summer sun, the verdant green foliage, the ox eye daisies, the blackbirds, that made the day. It was the people, many of them newcomers to us but of same faith and mind. It was good to circulate and share experiences of our parishes and hear what others were doing for Hope in the Future. It became clear that our Parish is ahead of most and perhaps all others in our Deanery. This will surprise some as it may seem that little has changed. Hope in the Future is a five year programme of which the Outreach component comprises:

- Communicating well through newsletters, websites and social media
- Serving the particular needs of the local community
- Creating social outreach groups open to all
- Linking with Caritas, CAFOD, SVP and similar organisations
- Caring for the local environment
- Inviting participation in activities such as parish missions or Alpha courses
- Reaching out to parishioners who do not regularly attend church
- Participating in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and action

None of this is new. These are the pillars of Catholic Social Teaching. The only change is about balance. As Donal Harrington says: *[There is] a tendency to see spirituality as a private affair between 'me and God', with no reference to or need for community. Perhaps this reflects a more widespread tendency to 'privatise' that characterises capitalist culture. As times push on and the world becomes insular and populist we too are pushed along with it. Hope in the Future encapsulates the mission to address this, to become less inward and more outward looking.*