PASTORAL LETTER

November 2026

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To be read aloud in all churches and chapels of the archdiocese on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, 22 November 2026

Dear friends, especially the young people of the Archdiocese

Today we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King and the victory of Christ over sin, suffering and death. It is a day of triumph as we place our trust in Christ who can overcome all trials and struggles. He assures us that he will remain with us until the end of time. We are called to be servants of his kingdom, who live our faith in action, caring for our families, being close to the sick, feeding the hungry, and loving our neighbour in need. As Jesus tells us in the Gospel, 'As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.'

Today is also Youth Sunday when we are invited to celebrate the lives of young people and young adults in our community and the hope and joy they bring to the Church and the world. I want to thank our school communities for the many ways in which they build the faith of our young people, support them through the ministry of chaplains, and enable their gifts to be developed.

I enjoy many visits to schools and colleges and always find the visits stimulating and joyful. I have met Faith and Mission ambassadors in schools. To those of you who are ambassadors, you have an important role in leadership or chaplaincy to proclaim your faith and help others to meet Jesus Christ. You are the best of ambassadors to other young people. Thank you.

At the end of June, Bishop Tom and I were very pleased to celebrate with 2,200 students, from schools and colleges, who had completed their Faith in Action Awards. This programme combines learning about Catholic social teaching and doing practical projects. One example was students helping at a foodbank and listening to the stories of why people come to foodbanks, and so learning to walk alongside them. Another project enabled children from a primary school to meet older parishioners at their coffee morning and learn across the generations. Other schools have followed CAFOD's Live Simply Award Scheme and some the Romero Awards. Congratulations and thank you for your service to Christ the King.

This summer we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Youth Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Travelling by coach with your leaders and chaplains, you arrived in Lourdes ready to serve others and experience the whole pilgrimage with prayer and processions. Three hundred and fifty young people in yellow shirts stood out across the Domain as the youth of the archdiocese. I felt very proud of you all. You prayed freely because you were living your faith with friends and the family of the Church. On the journey outwards, one lad said, 'I don't know why I am here or what I am doing.' At the end of the pilgrimage, he was happy and loving every moment. He said, 'This has been so good. I want to come again.' He had discovered how the power of love brings fulfilment by serving Christ in another person.

I want to thank our young people who serve at Mass and belong to the Guild of St Stephen. You travelled from across the archdiocese to the Chrism Mass. Your witness to me around the altar is very important. I hope it encourages others to join you in that service. Many of you love music and are involved in choirs and orchestras. Thank you for the way in which music enriches the liturgy. It is important to develop your musical gifts for the good of others. I am pleased that the Schools Singing Programme helps young people to develop these gifts for Christ our King.

Groups of young adults, including our university chaplaincies, are developing across the Archdiocese. In October these groups came together and celebrated a Mass at St Philip Neri University Church, followed by a meal. I encourage you to continue to form this network of faith and friendship across the archdiocese and build together.

All activity with young people needs to be accompanied by proper safeguarding awareness and practices. This is essential in the Church. I am confident that our activities are organised safely, but we must always be vigilant to ensure best practice. We must all make the Church and her ministry a place of safety and welcome for all.

I hope that these examples help you to understand more fully the life of young people in our Church. Of course, it is simplistic to categorise young people and impose our expectations on them. Some enjoy more modern church music, others love singing in Latin, others find it all very boring. Your gifts are varied but each of you has the seed of faith which is to be developed within you. As I said at this time last year, you are not just the future of the Church, you are the present Church: bring to us your hope and joy in Christ. Meet Jesus in prayer and become his friend.

At confirmation young people receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to strengthen them for service of God's kingdom. As the Youth Ministry Review proposed, I want us to develop youth leaders who will accompany and empower young people for leadership in the Church. Accompaniment needs time to listen, reflect, and discern how their hopes can be met. Now we must listen more to our young people to help them take the next step in their faith.

As we move into 2027, our youth ministry is at a point of transition. I want to thank Fr Simon Gore for his leadership over ten years. Also, I thank Lauren and Ellie of the Animate Team who have decided that it is time to move on to new ventures. Thank you

for your generosity and dedication to the young people of our archdiocese. I have appointed Fr Peter Murphy as Youth Director, who will build a new team to develop our youth ministry in relationship with schools and build local hubs, as proposed by the Youth Ministry Review.

Finally, I encourage you with words Pope Leo spoke when he gathered with 80,000 young people at the Stade de France in Paris. He said, 'Dear young people, as you discern your vocation, be assured that the Lord does not speak to us in a confusing way, but calls each of us by name, inviting us to follow him because he loves us. If you embrace his Gospel with an open mind and a pure heart, you will understand how Jesus invites you to serve. It is always a gift of life: full, faithful and overflowing with love. To overcome anxiety or uncertainty, have the courage to say a simple and wonderful word: thank you. Thank you, Jesus, for your love.'

I echo these words to you, and thank you for your courage and youthful joy, thank you for your witness, and thank you for your faith. You are the Church of today. Be holy and become saints.

With my blessing and assurance of prayers



Archbishop of Liverpool