



Society of Mary

North West Ward of Our Lady of Victories



*Forward in Faith ::: Society of Mary
Joint Pilgrimage to Ladyewell
Saturday 2nd June 2012*

We gathered at the church of St Mary with some trepidation regarding the weather, but we were able to start the Rosary Procession without umbrellas! A goodly number of pilgrims followed the statue of Our Lady through the country lanes to the Shrine itself.





Seating in the Shrine grounds very rapidly filled up, and still the rain clouds did not interfere.

Concelebrants were able to use the new vestments which had been purchased by the North West Ward during the past twelve months.



We were glad to welcome The Rt Rev'd Norman Banks ssc, Bishop of Richborough, as our Principal Celebrant for the Solemn Mass.

Father Paul Benfield ssc, Parish Priest of Saint Nicholas, Fleetwood, was our preacher on this occasion. He spoke under the title “Things are not always what they seem” and provoked us to be ready to explain how we honour Mary but reserve our worship for Almighty God. We honour Mary for her loving obedience to God, and so we should seek to follow her example.



As ever, the musicians provided us with a feast of sound which contributed hugely to the sense of worship in the Shrine garden. It was a delight to take communion in these rural surroundings which have such a long history of pilgrimage and worship.





After Mass the clergy assembled on the steps in front of the holy well to face the cameras for the traditional group photograph.

The weather remaining dry – well, almost! - the more hardy pilgrims took lunch in the garden, but many of us took advantage of the hospitality offered by Ladyewell House. It was



unseasonably cold, so the hot cups of tea and coffee kindly provided by the Shrine staff and volunteers was really welcome! We record our thanks and appreciation to them.

After the recent fire, it was good to be able to visit the first floor Chapel and Reliquery, both now refurbished and beautifully restored.

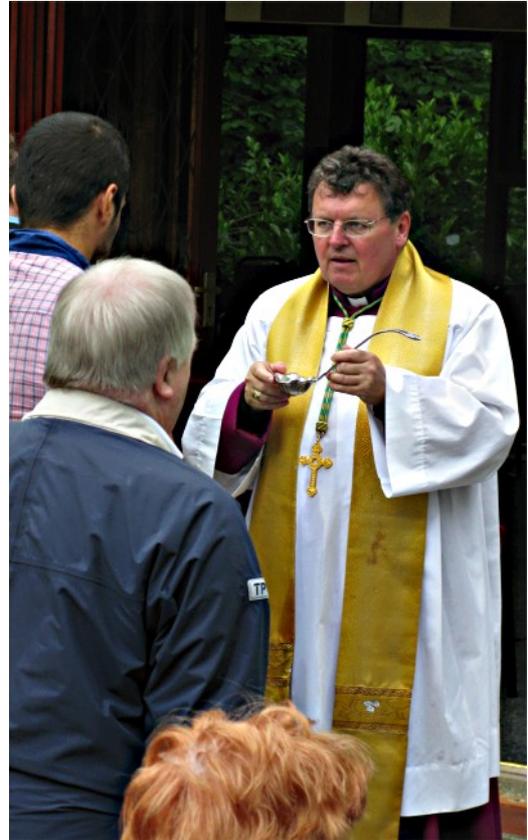


And of course the well-stocked Repository acted like a magnet, resulting in a sense of astonishment that so many pilgrims could fit into such a small space!



After lunch, the pilgrims reassembled in the garden for the service of Sprinkling with water from the Holy Well.

And then, to provide a fitting climax to the worship the Holy Sacrament was carried in procession into the garden chapel and the Shrine Administrator, Father Tom Hoole, presided at Benediction.



Our thanks go to Fr Tom and all at the Shrine for making us so very welcome, to Bishop Norman, Fr Paul and all who took part in the services on the day, to the outstanding musicians, and to those unsung heroes in the hivi jackets – the stewards!

