

Dear Friends,

The challenge of Christ comes to us all in everything that happens, from the time that we get up in the morning until the time we retire in the evening. At every point where we touch the world, we meet the challenge of the living Christ. It comes to us in every offensive letter that we receive, every affront to our dignity, every unkind word that is spoken either in person or by telephone. It comes to us in every unfair situation that we might find ourselves in, every bit of dishonesty, every denial of God, every desecration of beauty, and every temptation and difficulty.

It looks out at us from the eyes of every hungry or dying child, it comes to us through the reality of a world at war with itself, where mankind is so active in its physical destruction. We see it in the faces of the lonely, the lost, the weary and the persecuted. It is in the personal and the political, the secular and the sacred.

In everything that we come up against, large or small serious or trivial, ask yourself this one big question: How would our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ cope with it? When you realise and know in your hearts the answer to that, you will be ready to accept the challenge. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" James 2.26.

May Almighty God Bless and Keep You All.

Yours In Christ Jesus,

Father Ian Gray

Progress Report On St Katherine's Priory Church. Lincoln

Since the work commenced on the site in October 2008, much has been achieved and the progress of the works is to schedule and within the original budgets as agreed. Over ten miles in length of scaffolding was erected within and without the building and at any one time over twenty skilled tradesmen were working on the site.

The contractor's site team and our own Clerk Of Works have cooperated very closely as the work has progressed over the last tern months It is impossible in a short report as this to detail everything that has been successfully undertaken, but a flavour of the complexities of the work is listed below.

The roof was removed and raised 6 inches to allow for ventilation and insulation elements to be installed. The stone work where required was removed, and renewed and in many instances conserved. The brickwork where required repointed and gently hand cleaned.

The remaining glass panels were removed for cleaning and repair and several dozen new panels created faithfully matching the original hand made and installed. New guttering to the extensive roof areas fitted with improved rain run off areas created. The tower was carefully inspected; several tons of pigeon waste removed, glazed upper level panels repaired and new Louvers provided to the bell tower area. A ringing chamber has been created along with housing provision for one of the two organ blowers.

Internally the whole of the ceiling structure was dismantled and extensive and comprehensive renewal and conservation has taken place. It was estimated once the extent of the fragility of the roof had been established, that the whole roof structure could have and probably would have collapsed within a period of months not years. Had this happened then the cost of repair would have condemned the building to that of a demolition site.

Internal replastering to over 85% of the internal wall areas and the complete renewal of all the timberwork in the building has been accomplished. Extensive and comprehensive wiring systems have been built in to the structure allowing for state of the art computerised lighting and heating systems to be installed. There are extensive sound recording and amplification systems installed with invisible CCTV facilities, invisible speaker and microphone systems.

The magnificent reredos that was completely rotten and decayed has been fully restored to its former glory and the incredibly ornate stone Pulpit and Font have now re-emerged in their glory after careful restoration and conservation. The balcony area has been dismantled, extended and steel beam reinforced to carry the 15 tons of the Grand Organ.

The nave has now had a glass floor-viewing panel installed so the remains of the foundation of the original Priory Church East wall can be seen along with the 1302 aqueduct with its pristine green glazed water pipes still in position. Under floor computerised heating systems have been installed throughout the Church.

The Grand Organ is now undergoing a complete restoration; the Organ built by the firm of Kirkland and Jardine in Manchester in 1855 was on its completion in 1872 the fourth largest pipe organ in any church in England surpassed only by York Minster, Doncaster and Leeds parish Church's. The instrument is being restored by the successors of the original builders, Jardine & Co and when complete will be installed as a three manual 55 speaking stop organ consisting of pedal, choir, great and swell departments. It contains the earliest example of several "free reeds" stops, in any organ in England and is rated as a Transitional organ of National importance and significance. It has the same tonal quality of the organ in St Surplise. Paris. It has been adopted by the City of Lincoln Council and will be known as 'The City Of Lincoln Civic Organ'. In addition the city will sponsor a series of organ recitals each year.

There is still much to do and money to raise, but what has been achieved is truly amazing. What is beginning to emerge is a building of graceful proportions and magnificence. When complete it will be one of only a handful of church buildings in England to have been so comprehensively restored in recent years, not only the building but the surrounding external areas as well, car park resurfaced after the installation of a new and comprehensive drainage system had been installed. New railings and gates matching the original design as exemplified in the old gates to the west door have been made.

The exterior has flood lighting built in and extensive security and CCTV systems installed. The new Priory herb garden is soon to be planted and shrubbery placed into the perimeter flowerbeds. Soon work will commence on the Priory Centre complex in the form of reordering and redecorating, the Chapter room is decorated and soon to be furnished.

We have a building that we can all be very proud of, the details contained in this brief report tell only a small part of the story and the efforts of very many people. A very full and detailed account of the work and those who have made all of this possible will be compiled and published next year, but if in the mean time you are ever in Lincoln, please do pay us a visit you will be all very welcome indeed, and set the date of next Whitsun tide in your diaries, for around that time is when we envisage the service of rededication and thanks giving will be held.

Please remember us in your prayers.

May God Bless You,

Father Ian+

We love the place, O God,
Wherein thine honour dwells ;
The joy of thine abode
All earthly joy excels.

Lord Jesus give us grace
On earth to love thee more,
In heaven to see thy face,
And with thy saints adore.

William Bullock 1798-1874 and H.W. Baker 1821-77