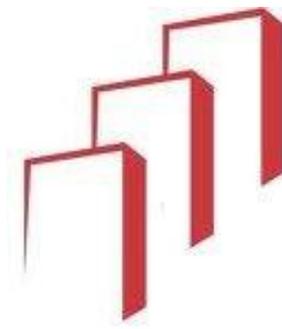


# *Milestones* in a Ministry



## Fr Neil Kelley at St Faith's: 1999-2012

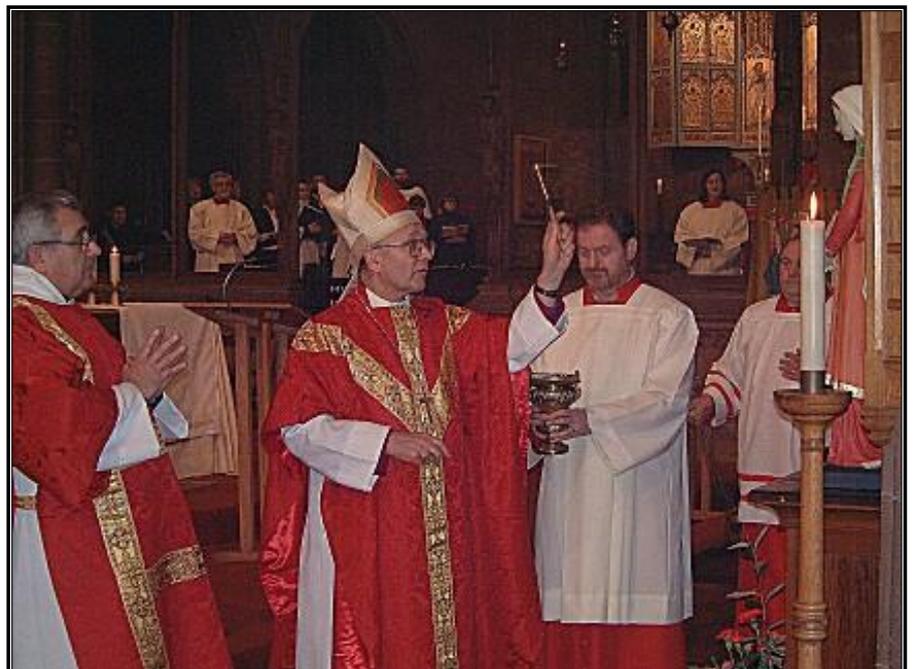
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To mark the ending of his 13 years' ministry as Vicar of the United Benefice, we present year-by-year edited highlights, in words and photographs, of each year's events at St Faith's

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### *A.D. 2004*

Once again there was plenty to choose from when selecting this year's highlights. Our first pictures show the dedication of the new statue of our patron, Saint Faith, found by Fr Neil in London but believed to be of north European origin – she was originally inscribed 'Ste Foy' - and blessed by Bishop Rupert Hoare, Dean of Liverpool Cathedral in a colourful and moving ceremony.





**The United Benefice Dramatic Society's 2004 offering was 'Robinson Crusoe' and it featured a cameo role for the vicar. The clergy were more formally attired for the Palm Sunday procession from Merchant Taylors' to the church, once again blessed with fine weather.**

**The parish pilgrimage this year was to Conques, to visit the shrine of Saint Faith. Lynda Dixon from St Mary's wrote about the pilgrimage in 'Newslink'**

We left Crosby in the dark, on a cold, wet Thursday morning in October. After a 14-hour journey, via Manchester, Gatwick, Toulouse, and a few unexpected villages, we arrived in Conques, in the dark - was there anyone there? No lights, no sound, except that of trundling suitcase wheels down the main street, to our various hotels.

On going down to le petit déjeuner next morning we were overwhelmed by the beauty of the view of the valley from our terrace - where we ate for the next four mornings - we did think about you all, as we sat outside in the warm October sunshine at 8.00 a.m.!

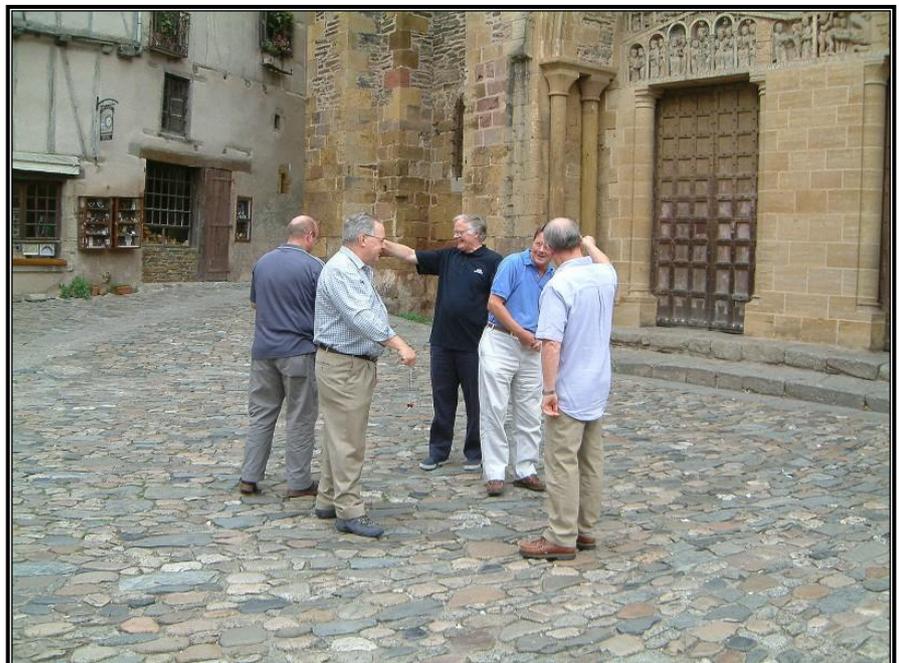
The Abbey at Conques is stunning, set in the middle of the village which seems to cling to the sides of steep slopes above a deep gorge. It was here, in a small 16th Century Chapel that we held our own powerful and moving services, surrounded by the thick walls soaked with music and prayers of previous pilgrims. We joined with other visitors and pilgrims for Vespers and Compline and of course, Sunday Mass, in the main Abbey. On two evenings Father Neil gave his wonderful organ recitals, which were fantastic as always.

On Friday some of us visited Rodez, the former capital of the region, with its rose sandstone Cathedral of Notre Dame where there is an especially fine 15th Century carved wooden rood screen in the organ loft. Saturday saw us in Figeac, wandering around the market and up and down the old streets. Some of the memories of the first Parish Pilgrimage to Conques will include being moved tears by services and recitals; the company and complicated bi-lingual conversations at lunches and dinners; the laughter till you ached and the beauty and peace as you were just sitting in the square.

Conques is a holy place, where the power of the Lord moves; where the glory of the Lord shines all around; and where you can be still and feel the presence of the Lord.

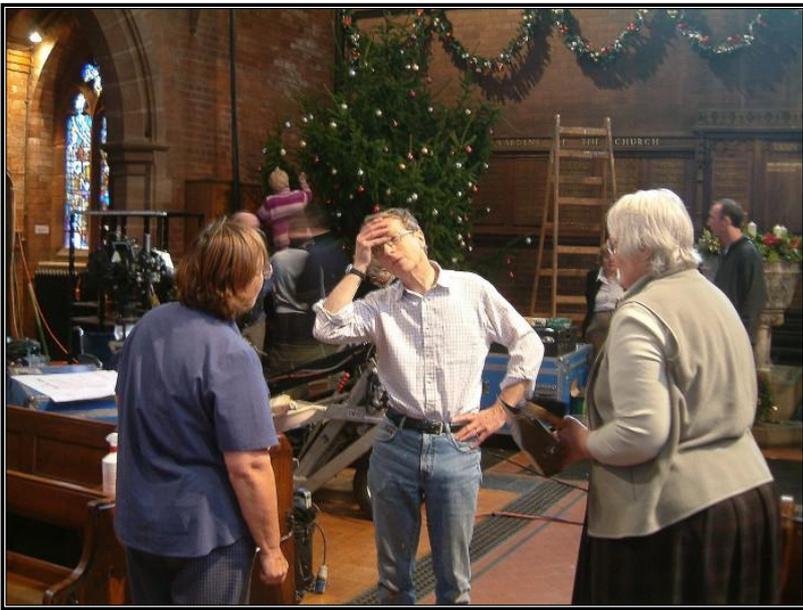


It was perhaps inevitable that a group of men should indulge in a game of 'conquers'



Soon after this, the BBC were upon us. They had scheduled two Advent services to be broadcast from St Faith's, and their presence, with miles of cable, lighting rigs, scaffolding, camera and sound equipment, dominated life in our church for what seemed like months. Eventually, after rehearsals, the two programmes were recorded and were broadcast at Advent on BBC One. Not surprisingly, this was a stressful time, as one of the pictures shows, but it proved also to be an unforgettable experience, a fascinating insight into the world of TV production – and a fine showcase for our pattern of worship and way of life here.





Finally, an image of everyday life Sunday by Sunday, as adults and children kneel to take communion at the 11.00 am Sung Eucharist.



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