



Fr Vlad finishes his challenge, supported by Sir Mo Farah

Fr Vlad's walking fundraiser hits all the right notes for St Mary's organ

Andy Drozdziak

Evergreen *Universe* columnist Fr. Vlad Felzmann is "chuffed" after succeeding in his bid to resurrect a dying church organ at St Mary's University in readiness for the university's 175th anniversary in 2025.

Fr. Vlad originally shared his mission to raise funds for a church organ in the university chapel during an episode of popular faith-based BBC programme *Songs of Praise*, entitled Faith and Fitness, broadcast in 2022.

The programme included scenes of 83-year-old Fr. Vlad walking over 10 miles around the Sir Mo Farah Athletics Track at St Mary's University, a feat he accomplished 83 times.

"In early 2021, as Visiting Professor at St Mary's university, Twickenham, I discovered that their organ chapel had died and needed replacing for their upcoming 175-year anniversary," Fr. Vlad told the *Universe*.

"Given my age and length of priesthood, I decided I would walk 52 laps of their Sir Mo Farah track, just under half a marathon, 83 times, my age in years."

After raising around £70,000, Fr. Vlad was praised by Sir Mo Farah himself, who commended him for his "amazing" and "incredible" work. "You set yourself a big challenge. So many laps around my track and for a good cause. Look after yourself," Sir Mo told the priest.

St. Mary's were also firmly backing Fr. Vlad's plans. "In the lead up to our 175th anniversary in 2025, St Mary's

is aiming to boost the role of music in the life and mission of the university. The chapel organ is vital to our ambitions," the University said.

Although Fr. Vlad was still short of the £500,000 which the replacement is expected to cost, SMU vice chancellor Anthony McClaran recently gave him a pleasant surprise.

"As SMU has discovered that the organ does not need to be replaced, merely repaired, the university has decided to go ahead with the repairs, bridging the gap between my money raised and its final cost," Fr. Vlad said.

"As I invited the SMU vice chancellor, Anthony McClaran, to accompany me on five laps, he was able to see that the track needed resurfacing.

"So, in 2023, I am chuffed to have been instrumental in SMU having now a brilliantly resurfaced running track but also, soon, an organ to enhance its liturgies and enable the chapel to host recitals."

The campaign has also been supported by James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of the Choristers, Westminster Abbey. "To design, build and install a new organ is an important cultural statement and a hugely significant investment in the future – for music, for worship, and for the formation and development of tomorrow's musicians," Mr O'Donnell said.

"I am delighted that St Mary's is committing to this vision and to an exciting renewal of its musical and liturgical life. I wish the appeal every success."

Church ministers hit out at conversion plans

More than 1,400 Christian ministers have written to Rishi Sunak to warn him over government 'conversion therapy' proposals.

The letter, organised by the Greater Love Declaration, says Church officials and parents risk being criminalised by the plans.

The Church leaders state: 'It has become increasingly clear that further legislation on so-called 'conversion therapy' is not only unnecessary – since abusive 'therapies' have long been illegal – but it is also likely to criminalise innocent parents, teachers, and Church leaders.

'Indeed, this seems to be the goal

of at least some of those most eager for a new law.'

'We firmly believe that Christian teaching on marriage, the family and human identity is of vast benefit to all people.

'Despite the unfair portrayal of our position by some activists, it offers profound compassion and love to all. 'Yet it is this standard Christian teaching which is at grave risk of being outlawed by the proposed legislation.

'When Liz Truss, as former Minister for Women and Equalities, published the consultation document on this matter in 2021, we pointed out that the proposals it contained would do

exactly that.'

The letter continues: 'Despite assurances on the freedom to express the teachings of any religion, as well as every day religious practice, we remain unconvinced that the Government will be able to avoid exactly this in the passage of this legislation. We urge that this confused proposal be dropped.'

In a statement, the UK Government Equalities Office said that there are "clearly issues" with the proposals that "are not fully resolved".

It stressed that pre-legislative scrutiny would look at any unintended consequences related to faith issues.



Littleway is a Catholic Charity, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Our Mission is for Evangelising through Healing and our Mission Statement is 'Freedom through Jesus'. We run Healing of Memory Foundation Courses in the UK, Ireland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

In addition, we organise Parish Healing Missions, Weekends of Healing and Outreach Days. We welcome invitations to come to your Parish for a Parish Healing Mission or Outreach Day. We also host Outreach evenings and informal 'Cuppa and Chat' evenings regularly on Zoom.

Prayer Requests can be submitted through our website, alternatively you can call us for prayer on:

+44 (0) 7936 269 143

All information on our events and our Zoom links are on our website:

www.littlewayhealingministries.com

Our Healing of Memories Course schedule for 2023 is as follows:

Littleway Healing of Memories Foundation Courses in 2023:

Mon 20th - Sun 26th Mar at Oblate Centre, Crewe

Mon 14th – Sun 20th Aug at Clare Priory, Suffolk

Mon 9th - Sun 15^h Oct at Oblate Centre, Crewe

Our Courses provide foundation training for Healing of Memories Prayer and are intended for those who either already pray with others or are prepared to learn how to pray.

As well as daily Mass and times of quiet prayer the six-day Course contains times of praise, teaching, reading from Scripture and testimonies. Each person will have the opportunity to receive Healing of Memories Prayer led by an experienced team member. Courses start at 5pm on a Monday and end after lunch on the following Sunday.

People are encouraged to come, if possible, with others from their Parish. After a Course, participants may join a local Cell Group. You will need to be able to attend the whole of the course.

If you have any questions about the Course before booking, please call us on: +44 (0) 7936 269 143

www.littlewayhealingministries.com

To donate to the fund, please click here: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/SMUChapelOrgan>

Pictured, St Mary's university chapel

