



The Bishop of Lancaster
The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff

Friday 26th April 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Tuesday 14th May represents 25 years since the first women were ordained priests in Blackburn Diocese on St Matthias Day 1994.

We will celebrate our original pioneering cohort of thirteen with a Silver Jubilee Eucharist in Blackburn Cathedral at 7pm, presided over by Bishop Julian, accompanied by the Cathedral Girls' Choir. Everyone is invited; clergy and readers are welcome to robe. There will be celebratory drinks after the service, so an indication of numbers would be helpful:

Phil.Hunwick@Blackburncathedral.co.uk

But to widen the day, I will be leading a retreat at Whalley Abbey, entitled "Celebrating Women's Voices and Vocations". This will run from 2pm with dinner at 5pm. This is open to all, men and women, lay and ordained. If you would like to come, for catering purposes please email office@whalleyabbey.org. There will be no cost.

"Look at that woman" (Luke 7.44). I love those arresting words of Jesus, calling the woman out of the shadows. These are words close to my heart. The ordination of women caused some division and heartache in the church and still does for some. Nevertheless, it is my experience that the church flourishes when we celebrate others' dedicated response to God's call.

With Lent and Easter, you may have missed this date in the diary, so please feel free to plug and advertise in your congregations and networks.

I hope I might see you on 14th May.

With best wishes

+Jill