

## **Blessing of Stained Glass Image of St Carlo Acutis – St Aldhelms Malmesbury**

This week stained-glass artist Michael Vincent quietly returned to St Aldhelm's, Malmesbury to work on the window he crafted in 2022 on behalf of the parish, dedicated to the teenage Carlo Acutis who died of leukemia in 2006. Michael came to replace an original glass pane to mark the canonization this weekend of the 'Millennial Saint' and remove the 'Blessed' title engraved on the stained glass, and replace it with 'Saint' in time for Pope Leo's declaration in Rome on Sunday that Blessed Carlo, beatified in 2020, who was formally canonized before the watching world this weekend.

Since the installation of the stained glass, and after several newspaper articles to mark the unique creation of the memorial to the young saint, there has been an amazing number of people interested in the young man with a profound love of the Eucharist. A special Sunday Mass was celebrated in the parish this weekend, with a beautiful liturgy designed by the parish, and led by the young people of the parish who processed from the sanctuary to the stained glass window with white roses in their hands. They placed the blooms in front of the window, which was incensed and then blessed with holy water. It was a beautiful and packed Mass to celebrate the life of Carlo Acutis; his love of bringing people to Christ using modern technology inspired so many, but above all with a deep love of the Mass and particularly the Eucharist, allowing people to understand and focus on the real presence of Christ.

As Father Thomas Kulandaisamy said in his homily on Sunday 'God has a funny way of raising up prophets and saints just when the world most needs them. It's like giving medicine to the sick patient. God highlights and exaggerates whatever is missing at that moment in the world, and provides us with the balm we need in the form of a saint'. We need the Eucharist, the real presence of Jesus in our midst. To celebrate, whilst the canonisation was underway in Rome, the young people of Saint Aldhelm's church led the parish in prayer and dedication of our newest Saint, who is an example for our lives of faith and a guide for our lives. After Mass there was a great parish reception, with guests from other local parishes and a chance to relax together. It was great to hear all the conversations bubbling around the room, and to listen to how people already use Saint Carlo as an example for their children and grandchildren. For so many the focus was on living with God, and going every single day to Mass whenever we can. He's just a lovely example whose faith was so important, and whose quotes and sayings inspired so many.

The parish church is open to all every day, and we warmly encourage everyone to come to see and pray before the stained-glass window which is focussing minds on this beautiful new saint. The parish prides itself on our welcome to all, which will be enhanced by the completion of our new parish hall in the coming year, so do come and see this stained-glass saint who has touched the hearts of the parish and captured the hearts of our visitors.