

The story of Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle.

A few years ago (November 2016) there was an incident with an electronic candle which became faulty overnight and ignited, setting fire to the side altar of Our Lady.

While the fire caused serious smoke damage throughout the church and burned through the oak structure of the altar the fire self-extinguished and caused no further damage.

At that time the parish priest's bedroom was directly over the section of the church affected by fire but he was unaware of the fire until he came down in the morning.

The statue from the 1890's was very seriously damaged and deemed to be unrepairable but it was put in storage in the church.

The altar itself was badly burned but again due to its age and construction was felt not repairable so it remained in its charred state until 2018 when Fr O'Brien took over the parish when he believed that we should not give up on the statue nor the altar and see if we could now get them restored.

Fr O'Brien believed someone on high was protecting Fr Daly, and indeed the church, on that night and that it was Our Lady after whom the church is dedicated.

He set out to get the statue firstly restored and had several estimates which seemed to rule it out but he discussed it with the people following Masses at weekend and opened an appeal to raise the £3,000 needed.

After a few weeks we were short by over £1,000 and he felt we could not get any further until he asked us all to pray to Our Lady along with him for help.

The following day someone gave him £1,000 anonymously for the work to begin.

The statue was then restored sat on its burn damaged altar as we are faced with other debt now due to building faults that is how she must stay for a while.

Meanwhile an urgent repair was needed for the church and we did not have the funds to cover it, again Fr O'Brien asked us to pray to Our Lady for help and again the funds rolled in.

It was then that Fr O'Brien called the statue 'Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle' since it has been clear that looking after her church is important and prayer to Our Lady always help.

In 2019 further funds were given to the church specifically for the repair of the altar which was rededicated within its newly decorated alcove where the statue now stands once more.

