

St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Community
Report of the Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council
May 2014

Another year has passed and what a busy one it has been! I took over as Chair of the PPC last September and a month later, I found myself looking after the Parish Master Plan of Events. This certainly flagged up what an active parish in so many ways we are, but of course there is always room for more activity!

The beginning of this year was tinged with great sadness when we heard the very sad news that Fr Jeff had passed away. At Fr Jeff's request, his funeral Mass took place at St. Dunstan's as he knew only too well that the size of our Church would not accommodate a clergy funeral and how right he was! However, in order for those unable to attend the funeral on Monday 17 February, a Vigil was arranged for the Sunday evening, in the presence of his mortal remains, as an alternative and was a very fitting way for us as a parish to show our appreciation for the time Fr Jeff was with us. I, like many others, was greatly moved by the numbers that attended on that Sunday evening, both young and not so young. After this short service, a great number of parishioners moved to the hall where we were able to reminisce, over a glass or two of wine, of Fr Jeff's ministry at St Hugh's. I am sure Fr Jeff would have been very touched by this very demonstrative show of our affection for him. May he rest in peace.

I mentioned above the 'young' and our sacramental programmes show what a young parish we are! For those who like statistics, the following figures are for 2013:

- 29 babies up to 1 year of age, 16 aged 1-7 inclusive and 4 aged over 7 years were baptised
- 46 school aged children and 2 adults received their First Holy Communion - this year we have 39 children
- 13 young people completed their initiation into the Catholic Faith through the Rite of Confirmation - this year we have 25 young people
- 2 adults were welcomed into our community through the RCIA programme - this year at Easter 6 were received
- 2 marriages were celebrated
- 12 deaths were sadly recorded

Something we have not had for a while, but pleased to report, three engaged couples have recently completed a one day wedding preparation course. Hopefully, they are still engaged!

We are very grateful to the large number of volunteers who give of their time to guide all of the above through the sacramental programmes. I should mention here that we owe a vote of thanks to Becky Underwood for co-ordinating the First Holy Communion programme for the last five years, but also to Catherine Burnham for taking on this role. Many thanks to you both.

The spiritual development of the parish has not been ignored. Not only have parishioners been meeting in small groups during Advent and Lent, as has been the case for many years, but we have also participated in the Diocesan Golden Jubilee sessions. Season Two has recently finished and the theme was 'The Word of God' (Dei Verbum) - the sessions looked at how God speaks to us, especially through sacred scripture. It should be mentioned that the numbers attending these sessions has been somewhat disappointing i.e. on average about twelve people.

However, the numbers attending Fr Alexander's 'adult education weekends' where he gives a short ten minute talk in the hall after each Mass followed by a ten minute discussion with appropriate refreshments, are well attended and very informative.

Fr Alexander has also brought to us during Eastertide a course on St Mark's Gospel and back in Advent we shared with the RCIA group the infancy narratives and Canticles in the early Chapters of the Gospel of St Luke.

We have had many opportunities to come together as a community socially over a cup of tea or a glass of wine. The parish rambles (walking!) continue on a monthly basis and, as has become

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the custom, end with a drink and a chat in a hostelry - a very pleasant way to spend a Sunday afternoon! Of course, the Summer Fayre and Christmas Bazaars continue to bring us together, as do refreshments after Beareavement Masses, Care Masses, Sunday 9.30am Masses, New Year's Day Mass. A cooked breakfast is an added bonus to our early morning Masses during Advent and Lent - a great start to the day for the thirty or so who attend both! On St Hugh's Feast Day last November, we celebrated with a meal at a local Indian restaurant and at the end of the summer we held a barbecue on the lawn area at the back of the Church. Our Altar Servers get together from time-to-time not only for training, but also to meet socially. The Luncheon Club meets weekly during term time to provide an excellent hot meal to its members - a very valuable resource not only for parishioners, but also the wider community. A very successful Race Night was held in the parish earlier this year to fundraise for a couple of our young people to take part in a World Challenge trip to Malawi and Zambia next July. We wish them a very successful trip.

Our Churches for Knaphill (C4K) representative, Roger Furnell, continues to do sterling work on the ecumenical front on our behalf. Not only does he attend regular meetings with the other representatives and clergy from the Christian Churches in Knaphill, but he also makes sure we know what the group are doing via our newsletter. Some of the activities we participate in are carol singing in the village at Christmas, distributing hot cross buns at Brookwood Station during Holy Week, the Good Friday Walk of Witness, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and more. However, I know Roger would like more support, so please contact him if you would like to be involved.

Our school continues to support and educate the young children from our parish families. We are very grateful to have a very dedicated Headteacher in Mr George and he is ably supported by the teaching and non teaching staff. For admission in September 2013, 64 families applied for thirty places and for starting next September, we had 94 applications. This clearly demonstrates how lucky we are to have such a great school in our parish. We are also fortunate to celebrate Mass in school every Wednesday before the start of the school day during term time. Fr Alexander is a great friend to the school. *A separate report will be produced by the school.*

The Parish Finance Committee maintain the finances with great diligence. Some of the work they do is to ensure that we get good value for money when taking on a project, maintain the fabric of the buildings, carry out H & S checks so that potential hazards are dealt with. Needless to say, the PFC are very much reliant on the generosity of parishioners via its weekly offertory collections. These monies can be considerably enhanced by the contribution which we get from Gift Aid - a very simple scheme to join if you are a tax payer! Our sincere thanks go to Rod Parkinson for the considerable amount of work he does behind the scenes in preparing accounts, monitoring the budget and the buildings and so much more. Ian Dallas also deserves our thanks for the work he puts into maintaining our Gift Aid records and promoting the scheme. *A separate report will be produced by the PFC.*

On behalf of the PPC, I thank the many parishioners who do so much in so many ways for us all. There are those who are visual, the musicians, servers, welcomers, Eucharistic Ministers, Mass co-ordinators, proclaimers and sacristans. The various catechetical teams mentioned above as well as the Children's Liturgy. Let us not forget those who work behind the scenes in arranging the flowers, church cleaners, brass cleaners, safeguarding, gardening - the list goes on. We thank you all. We have much to be grateful for here at St Hugh's.

Finally, a thank you to Fr Alexander and Deacon Rob for ministering to our many needs and being there when needed - thank you!

Anne Rushton
Chair PPC - May 2014