

Weybridge Deanery Newsletter

No.5



Parishes in the Deanery

- Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge
- The Holy Family, Addlestone
- St. Anne's, Chertsey
- Sacred Heart, Cobham
- The Parish of St. Cuthbert, Egham (Englefield Green and Egham Hythe)
- The Holy Name, Esher
- All Saints, Hersham
- St. Barnabas, Molesey
- The Sacred Heart, Sunningdale
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton
- St. Erconwald, Walton on Thames
- Catholic Chaplaincy to Royal Holloway, University of London

Religious Communities

- Comboni Missionaries (Verona Fathers)
- Company of Mary
- Hospitaller Sisters of the Sacred Heart
- The Josephites
- St. Patrick's Missionary Society
- Salesians of Don Bosco
- Sisters of the Christian Retreat

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Sharing The New Life Of Easter

It's highly appropriate that this newsletter is being published at Pentecost, because that great feast has so much to teach us as we seek to become 'a joyful company of missionary disciples' (to use Pope Francis' phrase). Pentecost combines an exuberant new life and openness to the unexpected. "*The wind blows where it wills,*" just as Jesus said it would. At Pentecost, their former hiding place is burst open, as Christ's followers spill out onto the streets to share their Easter faith. We inherit their calling, and at this key moment of change in our community, we also need to move out of our comfort-zones the better to share the Gospel.

At the end of January, Bishop Richard visited our Deanery to hear responses from our parishes to the vision he set out last autumn under the title, '*The Word Who Is Life*'. (You may remember filling in a questionnaire or attending a meeting to discuss this – and you can read about the results overleaf.) We need to look at everything we do together and ask: Does this help us to share the life of Christ, both within our community and beyond the walls of the parish church? Is it rooted in prayer? And what formation do we need to sustain our mission? Some of us may need training for specific roles. All of us need to deepen our understanding of our calling.

Key shared values have emerged from our consultation: a faith that affects how we live, a sense of belonging, the desire to welcome



others and to reach out to those on the margins. Parishes are beginning to work together to share resources and maximise impact. (Again, you can read about some of these initiatives in this newsletter.) And the falling number of clergy is finally forcing us to ask what is really the role of the priest or deacon and what is for others to do.

The first Pentecost was a pretty bumpy ride and our own journey will also have to deal with the unexpected. But rooted in the faith of all who have gone before us and blessed with the gifts of our own members, we dare to pray with hope again this Pentecost: "*Come, Holy Spirit. Renew the hearts (and the communities) of your faithful. Kindle in us the fire of your love.*"

Fr. Rob Esdaile
(Dean of Weybridge)

Our Parishioners Speak:

Are we ready to meet the challenges of the future?

"I value being part of a community of fellow Christians who demonstrate their love of God by living with strong core moral values in their day to day lives, especially thinking of others before themselves. (...) I value the fact that my child is able to be part of this community, as I felt it was so reassuring, when growing up, to know that God was there to protect me."

"I value immensely the ability to receive the word in the Eucharist to feed me on my journey, speaking to God in prayer and immersing myself in scripture."

"[I feel] an intense desire to help make the world a better place. In my job I try to be as helpful and respectful as possible to suppliers, colleagues and customers."

"[I remember] seeing Jesus guide me in giving resuscitation to a baby at the scene of a tragic car crash."

These are just a few ways in which people spoke, in our deanery survey before Christmas, about the role that Christ plays in their life and how faith affects their actions. This was our response to Bishop Richard's challenge to prepare for our future mission. 369 parishioners participated, and the results were shared with the Bishop at a meeting on January 29, at which every Deanery parish was represented.

Encouragingly, many positive initiatives have been taken forward during the last year, some of which you can read about (opposite). We are discovering how our Deanery structure can facilitate both cooperation between our communities and creativity within them (on themes ranging from a 'Year of Welcoming' to work for Justice & Peace).



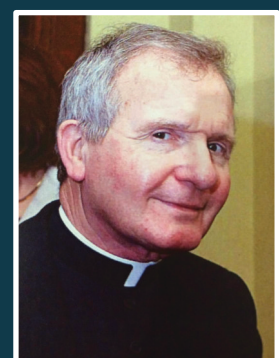
So, where do we go from here? The parish community remains a focal point of our planning. Our buildings provide a physical presence of Church and our priests offer pastoral leadership, although their hugely demanding role is only possible if parishioners support them, using our gifts to be the living stones that form our communities.

Fortunately, responses to our questionnaire are not short of ideas. Much will doubtless change in the years ahead; some responses urged us to embrace that change, "recognising the needs of all peoples and groups, no matter how diverse," and offering "more community and a realistic view of modern life." Some suggestions (about who is eligible for ordination, for instance) are not in our gift. But all can agree that: "Filled with God's love, we need to demonstrate we are caring, happy Catholics - our faith makes us different. The change needs to start with each of us". Amen to that!

Fr John Pearson RIP

Together with the parishioners of St. Erconwald's in Walton, we mourn the death of their much loved Parish Priest, Fr. John Pearson. May he rest in peace. As well as the good work he did here in our Diocese, he also did much to support the children of St. Michael's Orphanage in Uganda.

Fr. Richard Biggerstaff of St. Barnabas parish in Molesey has been appointed as Parish Priest of St. Erconwald's Parish and All Saints Parish, Hersham. He and Fr. Bill Muir CJ are to serve the three parish communities.



Fr David Maskell RIP

Fr. David Maskell, Parish Priest of Henfield in Sussex, and formerly Dean of Weybridge, died peacefully on March 4. Fr. David was Parish Priest at Englefield Green from 1997–2007 and then of the joint Parish of Egham until 2012. Many of Fr. David's former parishioners attended his beautiful funeral Mass at St. George's Retreat, Ditchling Common, accompanying him in a prayerful walk from the chapel to the cemetery where he had asked to be buried. May he rest in peace.

Around the Deanery

Alpha

The inspiration of journeying 'from Maintenance to Mission' remains strong within our Deanery. In both Esher and Thames Ditton parishes, 'mission' groups have been created to formulate parish development plans using James Mallon's *Divine Renovation Guidebook* as a starting point.

Use of the *Alpha Course* (a major element in Fr. Mallon's own strategy for parish growth) also continues to grow apace. It invites people to reflect on who we are, what we seek and how the Gospel responds to that search. Esher and Thames Ditton parishes have pilot programmes well underway, allowing parishioners to learn how to deliver the course to newcomers. Egham starts its second programme this month and Weybridge intends to run its second one in the Autumn (as well as completing a Young Adults' programme this Spring). We look forward to hearing about participants' experiences. There is much to learn from each other and, importantly, new relationships and friendships are being formed.

24 Hours For The Lord

Jesus waits in this Sacrament of Love – and giving Him time in the approach to Easter was a fitting and wonderful experience for those who were involved. The 'Hours' ran across the Deanery on March 9-10. Seven parishes offered times of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament during the two days, with the Sacred Heart, Cobham, taking the baton from Christ the Prince of Peace, followed by St. Cuthbert's, All Saints, St. Anne's and St. Barnabas, with the finale supported by parishioners at The Holy Name. Feedback noted that Reconciliation, which was offered during the evening of March 9 in Weybridge, was well received.



Week of Accompanied Prayer - A Retreat In Daily Life

Sunday June 24 to Friday June 29, 2018

The A&B Spirituality Group are offering individual spiritual accompaniment at Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge. A week of accompanied prayer involves spending half an hour a day, for five days, gently and confidentially exploring prayer (scripture, images, approaches etc) with a trained prayer guide, exploring how to deepen your relationship with God.

If you would like to find out more, or are interested in organising a Week of Accompanied Prayer in your parish, please contact: teresa_brooks_bisley@hotmail.com



Share The Journey

Cafod's Deanery initiative, 'Share the Journey', is inspired by Pope Francis' special concern for people on the move. It's part of an international campaign, launched by the Pope, which is now being run by many *Caritas* agencies worldwide. We walk in solidarity for refugees.

We are organising a walk across our Deanery on June 23-24, coinciding with the *Share The Journey* Week of Action. Details are still being arranged, but we hope that parishioners from across the Deanery will take part. Walkers will set out from St. Erconwald's in Walton on Saturday morning after mass and will be welcomed with refreshments at Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge, before continuing on their way. If you'd like to get involved, please contact: mbrown@cafod.org.uk for details and a map.

Fr David King

Greetings to all the readers of this Weybridge Deanery Newsletter! I am delighted to have been appointed as the new Parish Priest of Holy Name Church in Esher, and also to be part of this Deanery, surrounded by such wonderful priests and people. Having spent the entirety of my ordained ministry in Sussex, both East and West, it is great to be moving up to Surrey and I now find myself a little closer to where I grew up (near Epsom). I am looking forward to all that lies ahead here. There are great challenges ahead of us as a Diocese, but it is

also a very exciting time as we think about how best to live out our mission and move forward. I am tremendously hopeful about the future. I look forward to getting to know you all, and to working alongside you and to building the Kingdom of God together.



Ministering to the Bereaved

Working through grief takes a long time and no two people have the same loss or the same journey. Throughout the Deanery, many parishes provide support in many ways to the bereaved.

Six Week Bereavement Group -

Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge, ran a six week support group in January 2018. The participants who attended the group were from around the Deanery. It is hoped that future groups will be offered throughout the Deanery.

Drop-in Group and Funeral Support -

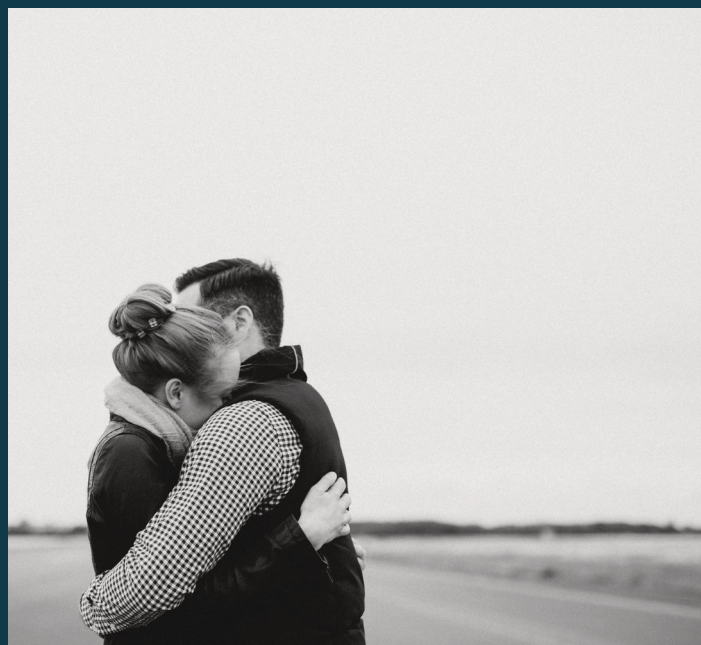
On the fourth Monday of each month, Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton, holds a bereavement group after morning Mass. It is attended by those who have been bereaved at any time. Members of the bereavement care team have a presence at funerals to act as welcomers and to help those less familiar with a funeral service feel at ease.

Annual Diocesan Bereavement Training -

If you are interested in becoming involved in offering support to the bereaved and would like to attend the Diocesan Training Course on bereavement support, please discuss with your Parish Priest - support of your Parish Priest is required to book on the course. For more details and the date of the Introductory Day to the Bereavement Training Course, please contact Katherine Bergin, Marriage & Family Life Adviser, DABCEC, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, RH10 6RP. Tel: 01293 651152
Email katherine.bergin@dabnet.org and www.dabnet.org

*"Blessed are those
who mourn, for
they shall be
comforted"*

Matthew 5:4



Confirmation 2018

206 young people have been preparing for Confirmation across the Weybridge Deanery this year. Adrienne Dines, Confirmation Catechist at Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge, shares the following:

This year, 54 teenagers are preparing for Confirmation at Christ, Prince of Peace Parish in Weybridge. At our initial meeting in October, we invited our candidates to prepare for a life of practising their faith by volunteering their help in a number of parish programmes and they rose to the challenge. They are welcomers, readers, children's liturgy helpers, flower arrangers, cleaners, gardeners and social events supporters.

The sessions, 12 in all, vary in style. Initially, they listened to us and our invited speakers - talking about Sin and Sacrament, Jesus and Prayer and when we felt they had a better idea of the undertaking that Confirmation is, we invited them to enrol on the programme for themselves at a special Mass of Enrolment. Happily, they all did!



After Christmas, we listened to them. Working in groups, they discussed (usually very feistily!) how the Gifts of the Holy Spirit guide the choices we make as adults and the consequences of those choices for ourselves and others; we looked at relevance of the Commandments in 2018 and how they shape our lives for the better. We had a lively session on how our prejudices affect our behaviour and our ability to honour Jesus' commandment to 'Love one another'.

Once they understood that Confirmation preparation is not a means to an end, but to a beginning of lifelong practice of their faith, we invited them to a Mass of Commitment.

Our aim is always to meet the candidates where they are. We feel that this preparation time will colour how they see their place in the parish and as members of 'the one Holy Catholic' community worldwide. Conversations were frank, challenging and we catechists learned a lot, as we are privileged to do every year ☺

We wish our youngsters well and feel confident with our church in their hands.