

Weybridge Deanery Newsletter No.7



Parishes in the Deanery

- Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge
- The Holy Family, Addlestone
- St. Anne's, Chertsey
- 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 (Kiltegans)
- Salesians of Don Bosco
- Sisters of the Christian Retreat

Contact us at:

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www.weybridgedeanery.org

Being Catholic In A Time Of Discord



Welcome to this edition of the Weybridge Deanery newsletter. It reaches you at an uncertain time for our country. Indeed, as I write it is unclear whether publication date will find us heading for a hard Brexit, a soft Brexit or even no Brexit at all. Will parliament be in session, prorogued or dissolved? Reader, you tell me!

In times of uncertainty, the Church shouldn't simply be a place of refuge for the fearful (though it should certainly be that). It should above all be a place of encounter: encounter with the Lord Jesus in prayer; encounter with each other, free from the labels of opposing factions. In our parishes, all are welcome, not because they agree with us or think like us or speak like us, but simply because they are our brothers and sisters. That is what Communion means: reliance on the love of Christ, a love wide enough and deep enough to embrace everyone.

The Church points beyond the present moment and present preoccupations. It calls us to a bigger picture – a vision which is 'Catholic' in the strictest meaning of the Greek word, *Kata-holos*, 'according to the whole', universal. And it proclaims that Love is stronger than death, Faith conquers fear, Hope trumps despair, Reconciliation overcomes division – because that is what Jesus did in his living and his dying. That is our faith.

As the political rhetoric ratchets up and debate becomes raucous, paradoxically perhaps our own voices need to get softer, gentler and more considered – not through timidity but in order to penetrate the battle lines. We believe in something more enduring than today's disputes and we draw our inspiration from somewhere deeper than the Twittersphere. And as our nation goes through this time of trial, regardless of who 'wins' or 'loses', maybe we should draw inspiration from one of the sayings of Saint John Henry Newman (who is being canonised in Rome on October 13). In 1852 he offered a definition of a 'gentleman'. Shorn of its Victorian dress and its gender it might speak to us still. His ideal was of someone whose great concern was to make everyone at ease and at home, a person with eyes on all the company, restrained in speech and with no ears for slander, assuming the good faith of opponents, hoping that one day enemies might be friends ... St. John Henry Newman pray for us.

*Fr. Rob Esdaile
(Dean of Weybridge)*

Becoming A Missionary Church

The first issue of this newsletter (March, 2016), was the follow-up to a big meeting at Chertsey which gathered 200 representatives from our parishes to respond Bishop Richard's priorities, announced when he arrived in summer 2015: **Mission**, undergirded by **Prayer** and **Formation**.

We've got used to talk of being '*Missionary Disciples*'. We've rediscovered the principle that our Baptism not only calls us into a relationship with Jesus but also commissions us to be his witnesses in daily life. Pope Francis' favoured image of the Church as a 'field hospital' underlines the urgency and practical nature of that calling: ministering to those wounded by life inevitably means 'getting our hands dirty'. But as Pope Francis also likes to remind us, that is the way we come to experience 'the joy of the Gospel'.



His vision is very different from the emphasis many of us grew up with; namely, that the heart of being a Catholic was dutifully 'going **to** church' (a church which was 'run' by Father!). Church is firstly something we **are**, the Body of Christ. Our gathering in worship makes that reality visible and tangible.

It may feel as though our deanery has only taken baby steps so far towards becoming a more outward looking, missionary Church. We've put in place some structures to help us work better together: this newsletter, for instance, and the deanery website (www.weybridge deanery.org - a very useful resource). The deanery clergy now extend their November meeting to a 48-hour residential session for prayer, reflection and planning. We bring parish secretaries together for training and networking. Some natural groupings of parishes are emerging. *Alpha* is used widely, together with various similar courses for those coming to faith. Several parishes are using resources such as *Divine Renovation* or *Relit* to guide their preparations.

With the rest of the diocese we have been involved in the launch of Bishop Richard's Pastoral Plan, *The Word Who Is Life*. Weybridge parish has already hosted a Week of Guided Prayer this year and Bishop Richard hopes that the whole deanery may be able to benefit from a similar invitation to go

deeper in our spiritual lives next year, together with a 'Roadshow' from the diocesan Formation Team and a revitalised *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. So we have begun. And now each of us must take responsibility for continuing what Pope Francis calls 'this missionary transformation'. For we have a Gospel to proclaim and joy to share.



So What Is A Deanery Anyway?

To prepare Cobham parish for its 'move' to Epsom Deanery, **Fr. Jonathan How** wrote a little piece in the parish newsletter, which might help all of us to get our heads around the notion of a Deanery (as seen by the Church's *Code of Canon Law*).

The basic unit of the church is a Diocese - or something similar to it. From these and in these "particular churches" the Catholic Church itself exists. Dioceses are divided into parishes: "a certain community of Christ's faithful..., whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor". These parishes have always cooperated with neighbouring parishes for pastoral care and the support of their clergy.

Deaneries are a formal part of this co-operation with a long and ancient history, in which neighbouring parishes are grouped together "to foster pastoral care by means of common action". A degree of oversight and co-ordination at a level larger than a parish and smaller than a diocese is usually needed, and, put simply, this is the function of a deanery.

The Dean is appointed by the Bishop (usually for 3 years at a time). He has the responsibilities of promoting and co-ordinating common action, looking after the clergy, ensuring the proper celebration of the liturgy and care of the parishes – in addition to his 'Day Job' as a parish priest.

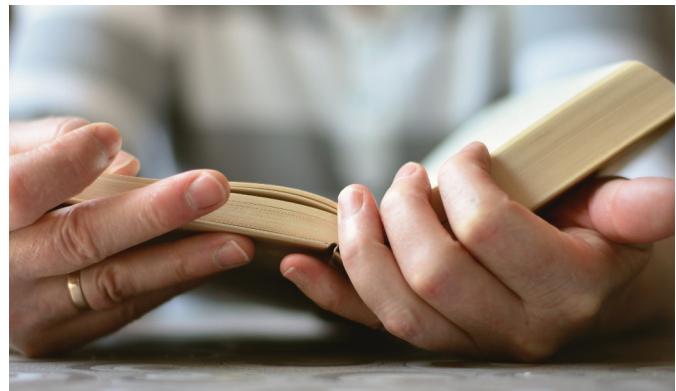
Parish News – A Focus On Egham

The Parish of St. Cuthbert, Egham, is running an *Alpha* course on Mondays, starting on October 13 (but with a break during December, recommencing January 13 and with a retreat on Saturday, January 19).

The parish was due to be very well-represented at Arundel Cathedral at the installation of new Canons on the Feast of St. Francis, October 4, because those being installed include both their parish priest, Father Chris Spain, and Mgr. Tony Barry, who is originally from Englefield Green – to both of whom heartfelt congratulations.

Another new initiative this term has been a renewal weekend during which parishioners were being invited to re-commit to the community and to discern what service each person can undertake in building up the Parish community.

If you are interested in any of these activities, please contact the parish office: 01784 477620 (9.30-12.30 Monday to Friday) or e-mail parishofegham@yahoo.co.uk.



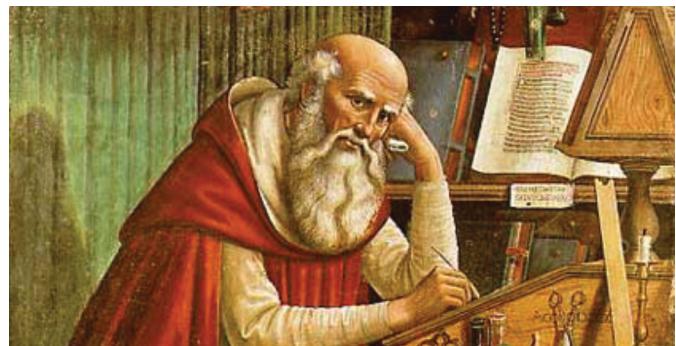
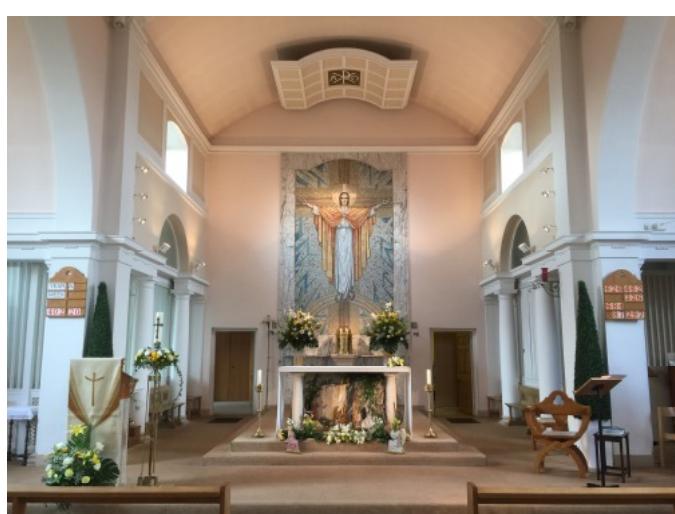
The God Who Speaks – An Invitation

Next year will see the 1,600th anniversary of the death of St. Jerome (who translated the Bible into the Latin ‘Vulgate’, the translation used in Catholic worship right down to the liturgical reforms of the 1960s).

That has inspired our English and Welsh bishops to dedicate 2020 to a focus on the Scriptures. A new initiative called, ‘The God who Speaks’ will encourage us to engage with the Bible in new ways. Throughout the year a range of events, activities and resources will be offered around the country focused on the three themes of celebrating, living, and sharing God’s Word.

The Bible is the epicentre of our Faith and personal study of the Scriptures has transformed the life of millions throughout the centuries. But the text fully comes alive during the Mass. The Second Vatican Council taught that when the Scriptures are read in Church ‘it is Christ who speaks’; and that in these texts ‘the Father comes lovingly to meet his children and talk with them’. We should take those amazing statements seriously!

But hearing God’s Word is just the start. We are then called to **live out that Word** in daily life, and, finally to **share it** with those who have not yet heard the Good News. That act of sharing will then enrich our Faith, thus completing the circuit. So let’s make 2020 a time when, right across the Deanery, we explore the riches of the Bible and develop ways of sharing that Word with our neighbours.



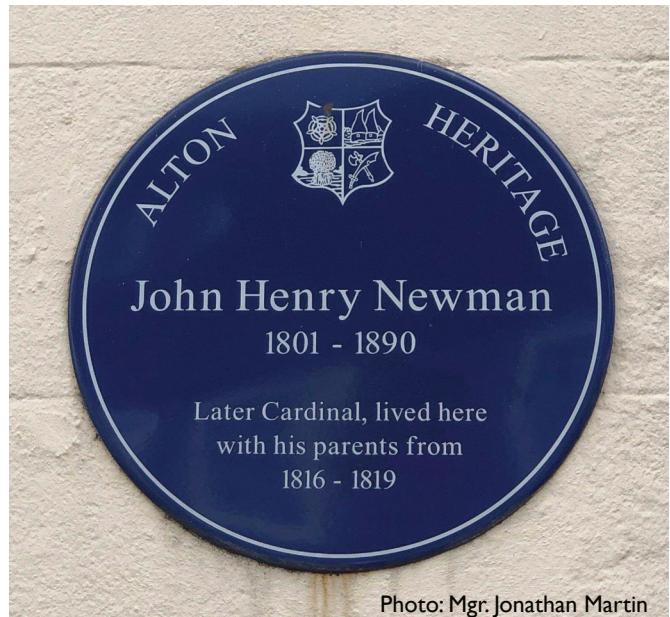
The Canonisation of Cardinal Newman

On Sunday, October 13, a large group of English pilgrims (doubtless including some from our own deanery) will be gathered in St. Peter's Square for the Canonisation of Blessed John Henry Newman. Cardinal Newman (1801-1890) was a key figure in both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in Victorian England – and so his canonisation will be celebrated by many Anglicans as well as our own Roman Catholic community.

As a young Anglican priest at Oxford he became very involved in 'The Tractarian Movement' – the effort to rediscover the Catholic elements in the Church of England's liturgy and theology which had been obscured by more Protestant interpretations. But, as a result of his historical studies of 'The Development of Doctrine' he became convinced in 1845 that he must himself become a Roman Catholic.

Those historical studies also convinced him (at a time when the Church was often understood in a very clericalised way) of the importance of listening to the lay faithful's instinctive understanding of the Gospel (the *sensus fidei*) and the role of individual conscience as our moral guide. And when, in 1870, the First Vatican Council defined 'Papal Infallibility' in a way that made some Catholics anxious (and many Protestants furious!), he prophesied that in a hundred years time another Council of the Church would bring greater balance. While his contribution was eventually recognised in his own lifetime when Pope Leo XIII made him a Cardinal, it was really at the Second Vatican Council that his ideas were taken up more fully and used to renew the Church.

Saint John Henry Newman, pray for us, that the wounds of the Reformation may be healed in Christ's Church and that the witness of the Church in our land may be renewed.



While Newman is associated most strongly with Oxford, Dublin (where he set up what became University College Dublin) and Birmingham (where he established an Oratorian community and school), he also had a (relatively) local connection, having spent a couple of years as a teenager living on the High Street in Alton, Hampshire.



Did you know that this October has been declared by Pope Francis to be 'the Extraordinary Month of Mission'? He is calling the whole Church to reflect upon our response to Jesus Christ's command to "go make disciples of all the peoples." The aims of the month are:

- to encourage Catholics into a deeper relationship with Jesus through prayer
- to look to, and learn from, the actions and sacrifices of our saints, martyrs and living missionaries
- to support overseas mission financially, through *Missio*
- to rediscover and renew our understanding of overseas mission

There's an accompanying **Social Media Campaign**, asking us to use our own social media profiles to share our own personal mission, using the hashtags **#MyMission #EMM2019**. **#MyMission** asks you to proudly let the world know how we, like missionaries overseas, are called to reach out and share God's love. This could be a simple act of kindness, like visiting an elderly neighbour; or a bigger gesture, like volunteering with or supporting a charity.

To find out more visit <http://www.missio.org.uk/emm>

