

WEYBRIDGE DEANERY NEWSLETTER

Clergy in Parish Ministry

Fr Antonio Benetti (Comboni).
Fr. Richard Blythen.
Deacon Joseph Cote
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Fr. Rob Esdaile (Dean)
Fr. Hugh Flower
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Fr. John Horn
Fr. Jonathan How
Fr. Michael Hynes SDB
Deacon Aidan Lynch
Canon Brendan MacCarthy - Retired
Fr. Bill Muir CJ
Mgr. Benny O'Shea
Fr. John Pearson

Religious Communities

Comboni Missionaries (Verona
Fathers)

Company of Mary

Hospitalier 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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Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Weybridge Deanery,

The Church has the wonderful mission of bringing the love of the Gospel into every part of society, every corner of the world. This, then, is the calling for every one of the Baptised – the call to you and to me.

In recent times, particularly during the Holy Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has called us to reflect on the ways in which we can bring the love and mercy of the Father to the world that is in so much need of his love. We are called to be effective, active disciples; people who proclaim the Gospel in every encounter with another and at every moment of our lives. We may feel daunted by the task, but the Lord is with us always and, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we find confidence to reach out to others.

We must reflect on our openness to the call we have received and, later this year, I shall be visiting every Deanery to explore the Vision for Mission that we have in this Diocese as we seek to serve The Word who is Life. With this in mind, I take this opportunity to thank you all in the Weybridge Deanery for all you have been doing to explore this Mission. What follows in these pages is a testimony to this and I look forward to being with you later in the year.

The work that Christ has given to us is truly wonderful – the work of calling others to the love of the Gospel as members of His Body, the Church.

With every Blessing,

+Richard



Divine Renovation And Us

Imagine being given a brand new parish church on a brand new site and told to make a community happen. That's more or less what happened to Fr. James Mallon in Halifax, Nova Scotia. *Divine Renovation* is the story of what happened next.

Fr. Mallon is clearly a very driven man. (He airily assumes that “*we have a priest who is working about 60 to 70 hours a week and is also enriching his life with prayer, exercise and relational support on top of these working hours*”, without reference to the cleric's age or health). He reserves himself for what he regards as the essential priestly tasks (“*I preach, I celebrate the sacraments, I lead*”). That makes me hesitate: can he really have ‘*the smell of the sheep*’ (the mark of a true pastor, according to Pope Francis), if his contact with parishioners is largely through lay employees?

Nonetheless, we need to listen to him. His key insight is that ‘*The Great Commission*’ (Mt 28.18-20) is primarily an instruction to **make disciples**. Going, preaching and baptising are means to that end. We've certainly done a lot of **baptising** and put vast effort into **teaching**. Until recently we have been intrepid in **going** to set up new parishes. But we have catechised without evangelising; we have sacramentalised without first changing hearts. Ask yourself: how many of us in church on Sunday (never mind those who don't come anymore) are really fired up, so that Word and Sacrament, Prayer and Community are our guiding lights and the joy of the Gospel fills our days?

We need to do something radically different for our parishes to survive and thrive. **Forming disciples** has to be put centre-stage. Anything which doesn't serve this mission needs questioning. That's why Mallon's book looks such a helpful provocation for our planning. He highlights *Alpha* courses as the most useful tool for initial evangelisation. Each parish will have to judge the way forward. But something's got to give. So please get involved in the conversation in the months ahead. An exciting journey beckons.

Fr. Rob Esdaile (Dean of Weybridge Deanery)

Preparing Couples For Marriage

In his letter, *The Joy of Love*, Pope Francis underlines the importance of providing forms of marriage preparation which go beyond the planning for ‘*The Big Day*’ - a process which Pope Francis warns can end up draining 'not only the budget but energy and joy as well', leaving couples exhausted before they even begin! They need to be helped to look at how they can build

a love which lasts a lifetime, what their promises demand in practice and how their vows are actually a way of living out their Christian faith. To allow time for this, Bishop Richard has now asked couples to give a year's notice of their intention to marry. But it is also a requirement that they take part in a proper programme of preparation. This is done using materials provided by the diocese and may be delivered either for a larger group in (for instance) a church hall or with smaller groups of 2-4 couples in the trainers' own homes over the course of a small number of meetings. **Currently we are looking for some additional couples who may be willing to take on this very important ministry.** The work is rewarding and enjoyable and provides a chance to support other members of your parish community as they prepare for this very important Sacrament and their future life together. It will also help you to deepen your own life as a couple. If you are interested in sharing in this ministry and would like to know more please contact paddyandchristinemonk@gmail.com or talk to your parish priest.

“Living together is an art, a patient, beautiful and amazing journey that doesn't end when you've won over each others' hearts, rather that's exactly when it begins.”

Pope Francis

From Maintenance to Mission – Making A Start

On March 4 clergy and lay members of our parish pastoral teams met at Weybridge for a very energetic and hope-filled morning. **David Wills** (Diocesan Advisor on Evangelisation and Catechesis) helped us explore the issues raised by James' Mallon's book, *Divine Renovation* (see review opposite). Despite some 'Transatlantic' elements that may not travel well to Weybridge, the book offers a wonderful vision of new possibilities for our communities.

As Pope Francis constantly reminds us, the **basic proclamation** of the Gospel Message (the '*Kerygma*' in Greek) has to be front and centre. *Catechesis* (more systematic teaching) only makes sense once this message has taken root and changed our hearts. That demands a new focus on basic elements like **welcoming** people and the whole '**Sunday experience**': does it lead people to a living encounter with Christ? And **re-thinking sacramental preparation**, too: it's not chiefly about giving people 'information' about what the Church believes; it's about bringing them into personal relationship with the Lord.

That's going to be quite a change for most of us! But here are a few simple first steps:

Get a group together to work through '*Divine Renovation*' and ask what it can teach us.

Enhance Welcoming Ministry so that it's about more than handing out hymn-books and really draws new-comers into the community.

Review all existing ministries and programmes to **ask how they serve outreach**, and ensure that it isn't just 'the usual suspects' who are invited to take part.

Run Alpha Courses on a regular basis, drawing on the growing range and sophistication of the material on offer online, so that there's an easy way into faith for newcomers, and so that participants then graduate to become evangelists of those who come after them.

Look to set up groups and events that **support people as disciples** after initial conversion.

Smarter use of social media, the web and parish databases to keep people in the loop and energise them.

Renewed attention to **creating expressions of faith accessible to the young**, pre- and post-confirmation.

Make mission a regular focus of prayer, both individually and in the parish liturgy.

Weybridge Deanery Mission Statement

As members of Christ's Church, reading the signs of the times and listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, we respond to the call to proclaim the joy of the Gospel to all, most especially the marginalised and the broken hearted. We commit to creating an inclusive community where the gifts of all are used for God's service.

Relit weekend retreat

with Michael Dopp at Ladywell Convent, Godalming from May 26-28 offering practical advice on how to undertake the New Evangelisation in our parishes. Cost is £189 full-board (and would be an appropriate investment of parish budgets in their future planning). This is Michael Dopp's only visit to the UK in 2017. Contact david.wills@dabnet.org / 01293 651157

REFUGEE TALES WALKS THROUGH THE DEANERY

The Refugee Tales walk is launched this year on Saturday, July 1 in Egham. The walkers will gather at 10.0 a.m. at the Jurors, the chairs in Runnymede and will take the great legacy of Magna Carta and freedom under the law as a theme. At every stop of the way leading writers will help tell the tales of a sylum seekers, refugees and detainees, as well as the stories of those who work with them. The walk will end in Westminster on July 4 with an event at the Institute of Contemporary Arts.



It is hoped that many local Catholics will join the walk on Saturday from Runnymede to Walton on Thames or from Walton to Kingston on Sunday, July 2. The parish of Egham will host many walkers the night before the Tales begin at the Jurgens Centre. and walkers are being welcomed to

Christ Prince of Peace in Weybridge for tea on the afternoon of Saturday, July 1 before the final leg to Walton.

In the evening it is hoped there will be a great audience to the Riverhouse Barn Arts Centre in Walton-on-Thames.

Information about booking and much more about the project is on the website www.refugeetales.org

Refugee
Tales

Could you let a home to a refugee family?

The global refugee crisis is the most significant humanitarian crisis of our generation. More than 65.3 million people are displaced worldwide. Millions of these refugees are Syrian families, forced to flee their homes during six years of war. Many end up in refugee camps with little hope for their families' future.

The Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement (SVPR) scheme enables the most vulnerable families – those with special health needs or survivors of violence and torture – to be relocated to a safe country where they can rebuild their lives.

“We just want stability, and hopefully once we have mastered the language we will be able to work... and build a life here. We know we can be happy in the UK.”

Seham, Syrian refugee

Elmbridge Borough Council has committed to resettling up to 15 refugee families under this scheme. Finding willing landlords and suitable properties in Elmbridge is a huge challenge. If we don't find houses, we can't help these families. That's why Elmbridge CAN is supporting the council's appeal for properties.

We're looking for a small number of private local landlords with properties to let. If you have a home to let, please get in touch and find out whether this scheme could work for you.

FIND OUT MORE

Want to know more about the kind of family you could be supporting?

Read our interview with Seham, who came to the UK with her sister and elderly mother through the SVRP scheme: www.elmbridgecan.org.uk/svpr-family-interview

Want to chat with someone about the possibility of letting your property?

Contact us and we'll be happy to talk you though what letting your property to an SVRP family might involve.

Transforming the lives of refugees requires a team effort.

There are lots of ways you can get involved in our work – from sponsoring a refugee family, donating or volunteering with us.

Find out more at

www.elmbridgecan.org.uk/get-involved



Elmbridge CAN is a community group, based in Elmbridge,

Surrey. We aim to build a

culture of welcome to refugees within the local community, and work to achieve the settlement of more refugees in the Borough of Elmbridge.

www.elmbridgecan.org.uk | www.facebook.com/elmbridgecan | contact@elmbridgecan.org.uk