



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

2013

*Dear Parishioners,*

It is customary for the Chairman of your Parish Council to write a letter to you at the time of the Parish AGM, and this year I must begin with an apology. I will unfortunately not be present at the AGM on September 29<sup>th</sup>, but I am very confident in leaving you in the safe and experienced hands of our Vice-Chairman, John Bates. I regard it as a great blessing to be part of our vibrant and active Carmelite parish community with its many groups, associations and special ministries, and the past year has seen the usual high levels of activity and commitment to our many projects and areas of service. All the different areas will be covered at the AGM, so I will select just five for special mention; Fr John may well refer to these as well.

The visitation by the Bishop in June was a success, and in addition to either celebrating or speaking at Masses he met with individuals and groups. Particularly noteworthy was a meeting on the Sunday with the Parish Council and many of those involved in different ways in serving the on-going life of the parish. It was the first time Bishop Peter had made an official visit and his impression was overwhelmingly positive.

A new baptismal preparation programme has recently been introduced which has enthused Fr John and the catechists involved and has been well received by the parents of the candidates. The diocese has asked for a report after the first few groups have completed the programme, as there is interest in recommending it to all parishes.

Several committees are involved in different areas of preparation for our important Centenary Celebrations in 2015, which include a plan for up-dating the church and building a new parish centre. More information about this will be given at the AGM.

The "Sign-up Sunday" initiative was a great success and resulted in a lot of new volunteers offering to help our many groups in different ways, and it is hoped that this will become a regular event as there is always a need for more helpers.

Saumya Jacob, our parish youth worker, went on maternity leave before Christmas, but we were fortunate in securing the services of Michael Ellul as a temporary replacement, helped in the early weeks by Catherine Forsyth. After the birth of baby Nathan, Saumya and her husband Abhy bought a house in Aylesbury and careful consideration of their future with Nathan resulted in Saumya very reluctantly resigning as our parish youth worker, but we were delighted when after interview Michael Ellul accepted the post on a permanent basis. We are very grateful to Saumya for her time with us and will be keeping in touch.

There are many other things I could write about but I know that they will be included in the reports at the AGM, so I will close by thanking Fathers John, Bob and Maurice for serving us so well. Thanks are also due to Teresa Lawton who is retiring after many years as parish secretary; we are most grateful to her and wish her peace and happiness in the years ahead. Finally, thanks to you all for your involvement in St Joseph's Parish community, with an encouragement to all parishioners to make every effort to attend the AGM and thereby keep in close touch each other and with the many activities in the parish.

Wishing you every blessing,

Yours sincerely,

*Charles Whitehead*  
Chairman, St Joseph's Parish Council

## Carmelite Community

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It has been a good year with lots happening. Since our Annual General Meeting last September:

**60** children have been baptised

**15** weddings took place

**78** children made their First Holy Communion (parish & school)

**48** young people were confirmed

**1** person was received into the Catholic Church

During that time the average Sunday Mass attendance (including all churches) was **772**. The Catholic population of our parish, as at December 2012, was **3,116**.

The new Baptismal Course for the parents of children to be baptised has begun and is working well. We need to highlight baptism, the first and most important of the sacraments, in order to pass on the faith to the next generation.

There are many parishioners who work hard to make this parish work, for which everyone should be grateful.

The Carmelite Community is looking ahead to its tri-annual Chapter next May. It is often a time of change, but not always.

In 2015, together with our Parish's centenary, we Carmelites will be celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of our Foundress, St Teresa of Avila. Among other plans is a pilgrimage to her birthplace in Spain in 2015.

Those of us who are going on the pilgrimage to Rome promise to pray for you all very specially in the Eternal City.

*Fr John McGowan*

Prior & Parish Priest

# Finance Committee

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Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013

## General

It gives me much pleasure to begin this report on a more positive note than last year's. The target of breaking even we set ourselves at the start of this financial year was just achieved. Other income available for Parish expenditure (not including monies raised by the Events Team, which was specifically allocated to essential maintenance projects) increased from **£44,004 in 2012 to £55,881 in 2013**, totally due to a generous legacy bequeathed to the Parish, and an increased number of smaller donations received.

Resulting from Father John's appeal in February 2012, offertory collections increased by **15.1%, from £166,785 in 2012 to £191,935 in 2013**.

Parish expenditure (excluding monies spent on the new boiler installation) rose by **8.8%, from £225,438 in 2012 to £245,213 in 2013**, most of this relating to the inflationary costs of maintaining the Church and Priory (i.e. gas, electricity, insurance) The very cold winter, according to British Gas, resulted in gas consumption in the UK increasing by 20%.

The end result for the year, therefore, excluding income and expenditure relating to our new heating system, resulted in our income for 2013, just exceeding expenditure by **£2,603**, against an overspent of **£14,649** in 2012.

The full accounts are detailed on the sheet attached and good as they are these results show that we are still sailing very close to the wind. Therefore we need to maintain controls on our expenditure as well as aim to increase our income, before we can make any inroads on re-building our reserves.

Our accounts for 2012 were subject to an independent audit. The auditor gave us a clean bill of health and not only complimented us for our thoroughness and accuracy, but also asked if he could suggest to the Diocese to adopt two of our "protocols" for general "Good Practice" use in the Diocese.

## **Maintenance**

The new boilers operated satisfactorily and up to expectation. Despite the maximum load on the heating system, due to the prolonged and coldest spell of winter we had experienced for some time at the start of the year, (the last quarter of this financial year) we did not suffer breakdowns in the system. We looked at various options to improve the heating in the Church and concluded that the major problem now was heat recovery. Once heat was lost through open doors, especially with North-Easterly winds prevailing, heat output from existing radiators was insufficient to restore a satisfactory temperature within a short period of time. As a result, we have asked for further funds from **Events Team's Accounts** to finance the installation of four larger radiators, replacing the existing domestic-sized ones. These will more than double the potential heat output in the Church. The total cost for this enhancement is estimated at around **£7,000**. We will also endeavour to improve draught-proofing; however, limiting door openings during the winter months would go a long way towards keeping the building warm and therefore, consideration must be given to using only the main door and the disabled entrance for access.

**The Events Team**, thanks to the generous support of all parishioners who attend their many events, have made it possible for us to fund, not only these enhancements to our heating, but have also provided funds for our new, state-of-the-art telephone system, as well as major additions and improvements to our office equipment. We are very grateful to the many volunteers who run so many events in the Parish and we thank all Parishioners who continue to support their fund-raising efforts. We will continue to use these funds to modernise, maintain and improve our infrastructure.

In attempting to reduce our running costs, we endeavoured to limit our maintenance expenditure to £1,000 a month, we targeted those areas which had become seriously overdue and, thanks to **the Furniture Market's** contribution of **£12,400** we managed to catch up with our back log. We are now up to date with all maintenance and, barring unforeseen events or requirements, we should be able to move onto a planned maintenance programme in the foreseeable future.

**The Furniture Market** not only makes a valuable contribution to our running costs, but they also help many other local charities and good causes. We are indeed fortunate to have such a voluntary organisation in our Parish and we are eternally grateful to the many volunteers who, regardless of the weather, turn out every week to man the market, collect and deliver furniture. The funds they contribute will continue to be used for special maintenance needs.

In saying "thank-you" to them, we also acknowledge the work carried out by the many volunteers in our Parish who, willingly and happily, give many hours of unpaid "labour-of-love." Love for our God and His Church in our Parish. If we had to pay for all the work carried out by our army of volunteers, our average weekly cost would be a great deal more than this year's weekly average of £4,840.

### **Gift Aid**

The improvement in the numbers of Parish tax payers who now gift aid their donations continued and this year, the tax refund we received amounted to **£22,902**, an increase of **£1,810 (8.6%)** on last year. This brings the value of Parishioner Gift Aid donations up to the Diocese average level of approximately 65%. We continue to encourage tax payers to gift aid their donations as, at no extra cost to themselves, it allows us to claim back meaningful sums of much-needed funds. Simply, by stating that you wish to gift aid your donation and by completing a Gift Aid Declaration form, available on our web site or the Parish Office, the value of the amount you give by Standing Order or place in your envelope each week is worth an extra 25% to the Church.

We would also encourage Parishioners to consider making their weekly donations through their banks by Standing Order. Not only would this ease the burden on our volunteer cashiers, but it would make it easier for us to control our finances. It would also mean that the Church would receive donations on those occasions when, for whatever reason, Parishioners are unable to make their contributions personally. The decrease in income during the holiday season is noticeable but, unfortunately, bills continue to come in, even during holidays.

One disadvantage with standing orders is that it is easy to forget to review the amount donated and, because of this, we have produced

a book-mark that reminds donors to review their donations annually, at the very least. Please collect yours from the back of the Church or ask your Mass Representative for one.

## **Outlook**

Hopefully, we are now beginning to see a light at the end of our economic tunnel and the financial hardships of the past few years may become less painful in the coming year. However, we are not yet out of the woods and we need to remain vigilant and careful. We will continue therefore to limit our expenditure on maintenance and endeavour to manage on the £1,000 a month limit we set ourselves last year. We will also keep all other expenses under constant review. We will use **Furniture Market funds** for any special maintenance needs that may arise.

Similarly, **Events Team funds** will continue to be used for IT and office enhancements, repairs and replacements and to maintain and improve our infrastructure. Unused funds from either of the two sources will be used to begin rebuilding our reserves.

We must aim to cover our running costs with the weekly Parishioner contributions and, therefore, we have to ask Parishioners to review their personal gifts to the Church and, if at all possible, to consider an increase, however small, to help us to meet the inflationary rise we will be facing, especially on energy and general establishment costs.

Whilst we are aware of the financial pressures we all are under and very much regret having to "ask for more" our running costs will no doubt increase over the coming months, at the very least by the predicted level of inflation. Any increase above 2.5% from those who can afford it will be very welcome and gratefully received. To keep up with our inflationary increases and begin to rebuild our reserves, we must aim to increase our annual income to at least **£275,000** by the end of this current financial year. With your help, we will achieve our target.

I pray that our Good Lord will bless you all for your continued, kind and generous support for His Church in our Parish.

*John Forte*

Chairman, St Joseph's Finance Committee

## **Safeguarding and Health & Safety**

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Safeguarding covers the procedures (good practice) and processes (DBS checks until recently called CRB checks) in place to ensure the wellbeing of Children and Vulnerable Persons who use St Joseph's Church, Parish Centre, Hall, Grounds or who are involved in Parish activities.

Health & Safety is concerned with the procedures and processes in place within St Joseph's Church to ensure the safety of all who are involved in any Church activity or who use Church facilities.

Much has changed recently in relation to Safeguarding processes and will continue to change over the coming months. Until the Diocese is fully staffed in the Safeguarding Office there is likely to be some delays in implementing new procedures and in processing DBS checks. I am grateful for the dedication of group leaders who perform a valuable role in ensuring that good practice takes place within their group activities as this is the best way of ensuring the safety of those in Church care.

There has been considerable progress in making improvements that assist with the Health & Safety of our Parish and ensure compliance with legislation. My thanks are extended to those who assist with the Health and Safety Inspections and the carrying out of the improvement works.

*John Bates*

Safeguarding and Health & Safety

## **Evangelisation Activity Group**

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### **Baptism Preparation (*Christine Cornwell*)**

Since June the parish has offered formation for parents requesting Baptism for their children. The sessions are based on "*With You Always*" which was launched in the Archdiocese of Liverpool in 2012. The emphasis is on family catechesis. Parents are invited to attend the Sunday Eucharist on three consecutive Sundays, followed by formation sessions based on their experience of the Eucharist. The families are welcomed into the community on the first Sunday and presented with a family bible.

We now celebrate communal baptisms with approx 3-4 children being baptised in any one celebration. This is an excellent way to celebrate this sacrament as the wider parish community is present and families receive support from each other.

A total of 17 couples participated in the pilot sessions held in June and July and the feedback we have received to date has been very positive.

*Volunteers* – We commenced with a team of 10 people involved but we have recently recruited additional members on the team.

*Recruitment & Training* – We hope to run a formation session for new catechists in October.

### **CAFÉ (*No Current Representative*)**

The CAFE Prayer Group has continued to meet but more sporadically. During this Year of Faith they have discussed "The Year of Faith" Bible Study. Topics have been: Belief in Jesus Christ, Assent to the Creed, Conversion, The Witness of Calvary, Celebrating Faith, Faith and the New Evangelisation.

The group arranged two prayer evenings in the Oratory during March to pray for the College of Cardinals attending the Conclave to elect the successor to Pope Benedict XVI.

### **Carmelite Secular Order (*Bob Flynn*)**

The group currently has three new members. One member recently made his final commitment. The Carmelite Community is committed to supporting this group.

### **Christians Together Meeting Representative (*Sally Taylor*)**

There is no longer a Churches Together group. The Ministers from the local churches meet fairly regularly at the home of Charles Whitehead.

The one event that took place in 2013 was the Walk of Witness and Stations of the Cross on Good Friday in the evening as this has been happening for about 3 to 4 decades. However, Fr John has said that for liturgical reasons there should be no further services in the church following the service of Christ Passion at 3pm in the afternoon. He is therefore discussing with other ministers the retiming of this service for future years.

There are bi-annual mornings at Milton Keynes run by the Ecumenical Commission of Northamptonshire which the Bishop "expects" to be represented by at least one person from each Parish plus maybe a friend from another denomination.

### **Men's Bible Study/Supper Group (*Patrick Howe*)**

We have met on the last Friday of the month during 2012/2013 and have been discussing Pope Benedict's book entitled 'Jesus of Nazareth'. We have enjoyed supper together and stimulating conversation.

The group has expanded in number and includes some members from Uxbridge and Ruislip.

*Volunteers* – During the forthcoming year we may need to discuss a change in Leadership.

*General* – We are always happy and eager to welcome new members from St Joseph's.

## **Ad Hoc Events**

### ***Lent***

During Lent Charles Whitehead gave two excellent talks on "The link between The Year of Faith and the New Evangelisation." Both evenings were most interesting and very well attended.

### ***Pentecost Novena***

Our parish participated in the initiative of the Diocesan Evangelisation Team, which encouraged parishes around the diocese to hold simple prayer services for the Novena of Pentecost, 10th-18th May. Their aim was to have at least one parish in the Diocese praying the Novena on one night during the nine days leading up to Pentecost. Our service took place on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May at 8.00 pm.

### ***Talks***

In preparation for Pentecost, Charles Whitehead gave two talks to prepare us for this great feast. The topics were "The coming of the Holy Spirit" and "The Holy Spirit in our lives". Both talks were very interesting and well attended.

*Christine Cornwell*

Evangelisation Activity Group Leader

## **Liturgy and Church Activity Group**

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### **Altar Servers (*Oliver Bentley*)**

Thank you to all our young altar servers who have served our priests and our parish well during the last year. We have plans to recruit new servers from Year 4 children to boost the numbers, which is only just sufficient to cover the Sunday masses. Young people who have made their First Communion are welcome to join the team (and full training will be given).

### **Banners (*Ros Burton*)**

Our church banners are made by three ladies in the parish who spend several months praying, designing and making each set as an aid to the liturgy. New banners designed and made this year include: The Year of Faith, Christmas, Lent and Ordinary Time. Future plans include a banner for the new Baptism programme and a second set for Ordinary Time.

### **Bookshop (*Ros Burton*)**

The Bookshop provides Catholic books and missals, prayer books, devotionals, children's bibles, Charity Christmas cards and Christian greetings cards as a service to the parish. You are welcome to browse at any time and pay for your purchases in the secure facility provided. Bibles and missals can be ordered through the parish office. We have made a modest profit for the parish during the past year.

### **Church Cleaning (*Anne Daniel*)**

Thank you to our wonderful cleaners who do marvellous work looking after the church, sacristy and oratory every week (and especially at Christmas and Easter time when we have a big clean). In the spring, our cleaning cupboard had a much needed refurbishment and new equipment. This was a great help and boosted morale. We work in teams of two on a six-weekly cycle and we are always happy to welcome new volunteers.

### **Eucharistic Ministers (*Michael Hargreaves*)**

Thank you to all of our Eucharistic Ministers who serve the priests and the parish at both Sunday and weekday masses, and also our special masses at Christmas, Easter, First Communion and Confirmation. Our rotas work very well and Ministers are always

happy to deputise in case of unforeseen absence. We enjoyed our annual training day in January, which is also a helpful opportunity for us all to meet.

### **Flower Arrangers (*Maureen Murphy*)**

Thank you to our flower arrangers who create the beautiful arrangements each week, and for the special celebrations of Christmas, Easter, First Communion, Confirmation and weddings. Many hours go into planning, buying, arranging and caring for the flowers each week.

We have a good team of arrangers and are always happy to welcome new people of all abilities.

### **Mass Readers (*Peter Mancini and Robert Thompson*)**

Thank you to all of our Readers for your service throughout the year. The number of readers is a little on the low side at the present time and it would be helpful to hear from anyone interested in attending a training course.

During February and March we ran a Lenten Lectors course, with external speakers, which were well received.

### **Music (*Joan Barham*)**

Thank you to all our many singers and musicians who have provided music at our Sunday masses, our celebrations of Christmas and Easter, First Communions and Confirmation and also two Taizé evenings.

Music provision during Sunday mass:

- 9am – Music every week provided by Nan Jacobson and the Children's Choir
- 11am – Music every week provided by Mary Keenan and Charles Watters alternately
- 5.30pm – Music provided one or two times each month by Michael Ellul, Richard Cottle and some of our young singers.

We have purchased a substantial number of new hymn books.

New singers and musicians are always welcome.

### **Eucharistic Adoration (*Joan Barham*)**

Thank you to the parishioners who sit with the Blessed Sacrament on Wednesday and Thursday throughout the year. Our numbers are a little low at the moment and it is challenging to keep a full rota. If you are available for an hour on a Wednesday or Thursday we would be very pleased to hear from you.

### **Repository (*Margie Carter and Marie Godfrey*)**

The Repository provides rosary beads, traditional items and greetings cards for sale after 11am Sunday mass. Margie and Marie have provided this service to the parish for many years and would really appreciate some extra help to cover other masses and holidays.

### **Rosary Circle (*Christine Cornwell*)**

The Rosary is prayed in the Oratory every Tuesday and Friday at 7.30pm for our parish. During the past year we have gained several new members. Everyone is welcome to join us.

### **Sacristans**

The Sacristy has received some much needed attention during the past year:

- A fresh coat of paint and a new cupboard for the communion supplies
- Repairs have been made to damaged vestments
- Altar server albs have been reorganised
- Altar linen has been repaired and reorganised
- White prejures for weddings and First Communions are currently being recovered.

### **Denham (*Sarah Hampel*)**

We have a good number of Readers (14), Eucharistic Ministers (18) and Flower arrangers/Cleaners (14). The rotas are prepared twice a year and everyone seems to adhere to them, asking someone else to do their particular duty if they are unable to do so. The Eucharistic Ministers are taking it in turns to take Communion to a

lady in Denham Manor Nursing Home every Sunday after Mass and sometimes to one or two incapacitated parishioners.

Father John asked us recently to do the Readings in twos which we now do.

Our small Choir, under the excellent direction of Richard Cottle, performs on the first Sunday of the month.

*Roy Burton*

Liturgy & Church Activity Group Leader

*Many of our groups would appreciate new members.  
If you would like to know more about volunteering  
please speak to your Mass Representative or  
one of the ladies in the Parish Office.*

## **Outreach Activity Group**

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Here is our report for the last year covering the activities of the following Working Groups which are, as the name suggests, all trying in different ways to reach out and help others and all hoping to attract more parishioners to join in that work:

### **LIFE Group (*Sally Taylor*)**

We have continued to develop stronger links with the two LIFE Houses in Slough; these offer accommodation and help to young women who have decided to keep their babies. These houses are threatened with having their official funding withdrawn and are working hard to secure their future. Every year we give £500 to the Cameroon Family Life Apostolate for their pro-life work. These are practical examples of our primary objective which is working to gain recognition of the sanctity of human life from its inception to its natural conclusion.

In partnership with the Events Team we are planning a fundraising evening featuring an Abba Tribute Band.

Opportunities to help in the LIFE Houses in their Skills Programme always exist and for a DIY person.

### **London and Slough Run (*Michael Hargreaves*)**

Our run up to London on Monday evenings is being well received as usual with the numbers fed varying between 100-200, depending on the season. We are blessed at the moment with a good team of volunteers but we would like to encourage anyone willing to be a driver to help out on the rota. The packers, as always, are performing sterling work in preparing the food drinks etc. for the run.

After Christmas we are hoping to get involved in the Slough Run which takes place on Sunday afternoons.

The 6<sup>th</sup> October sees a charity Race in aid of the Slough and London Run; we hope to attract a large number of participants and raise a substantial amount of funds for the homeless of London and Slough.

## **SHOC, Slough Homeless Our Concern (*Ray Waite*)**

*2012/13 Highlights:* The number of homeless and vulnerable people coming to SHOC for help has increased greatly. These high numbers are expected to continue because of the changes to the welfare system. In 2012 SHOC received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services, the MBE for charities. SHOC also received a 4 year grant from the Big Lottery Fund to help continue our Springboard Learning Centre service which helps our clients gain skills and get employment. In the last year we have helped over 60 clients to get accommodation and we have helped 25 clients to get jobs. Funding is still our biggest challenge as the Big Lottery Fund covers less than half of our costs.

*Volunteers:* Members of the Parish have contributed to the charity by attending events such as the quiz night in March. We are very grateful to Jo Bankhead for running another indulgence day and cycling to raise funds for SHOC, and to Nicky Lowe for running a Christmas Fair. We are also very grateful to Mary Forsyth for providing great admin support for our events. We need more volunteers to help with fundraising events and the preparation of funding applications. We always have opportunities for volunteers to come to Serena Hall in Slough to help serve tea and coffee and lunches, etc. Volunteers always enjoy helping out on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

*General:* More information on SHOC is available at our website [www.sloughhomeless.org](http://www.sloughhomeless.org). If you would like to receive our twice yearly newsletter or become a volunteer, please contact Ray Waite on 01753 891442.

## **Traidcraft (*Eileen Carkett*)**

Fairtrade is an international movement to give a better deal for the people in developing countries. Fairtrade works with small scale producers who suffer from unfair tariffs and poor market access. They are given a fair stable price for their goods and access to training and ways to develop their business. They are also given a small extra premium, which enables them to improve their living conditions.

There have been Fairtrade Sales in the Parish since 2009, but we became a Fairtrade Parish in January 2012. Fairtrade goods are on sale on the first Sunday in the month, in the Parish Centre after

9am Mass, and in the First Committee room after 11am Mass. Sales vary each month, but are supported by the Parish especially by the Justice and Peace group. With their valuable help, we were able to speak after each Mass in St Joseph's, Denham and Chalfont St Giles churches during Fairtrade Fortnight.

Ideally I would like to extend the Sales to these two churches, but there are other Fairtrade Sales at various local places, which I try to publicise.

### **Catholic Women's League (*Maureen Burrows*)**

In October many of our Ladies attended the Catholic Women of the Year lunch in London and we went to our National AGM in Coventry. We have enjoyed an interesting and varied programme during the year including having speakers at our meetings (one on growing old disgracefully), a pilgrimage (to Aylesford), a theatre visit and our annual Cream Tea (which was held in Jane Dawson's garden in August. It was a lovely day and we raised money for Thames Hospicecare).

Over the year we have also raised money for: The London and Slough Run, The CWL Relief and Refugee Fund, World Union of Catholic Women's Organisation (WUCWO) and CAFOD (We bought two bicycles instead of sending each other Christmas cards).

We support the work of Age Concern by providing a lunch on a rota basis in St Peter's church hall and we try to help the parish whenever we can.

### **Justice and Peace (*Sister Mary Christa*)**

The present group came into being just over two years ago and meets monthly at the Holy Cross Convent.

We are a campaigning group with, broadly speaking, two types of members: those who attend meetings when they are free to do so, and others who support the objectives of the group but normally do not come to meetings but who do sign web-based petitions which are in line with the group's objectives. These last are periodically circulated to members who are then free to decide if they wish to support them; there is no obligation to do so. Occasionally the group will decide at one of its meetings to support such petitions as

a group by signing or by writing in the name of the group to our local MPs etc. The group does not undertake fund-raising as such.

The group's objectives are very wide and cover any and all aspects of the Church's teaching on social justice. Membership of the group is not limited to Catholics nor does it impose any specific level of commitment in time or anything else.

Apart from supporting campaigns run by others, the group has promoted Fair Trade goods throughout the parish during the annual Fair Trade Fortnights and has sought and obtained the Parish Council's approval to the parish becoming recognised as a Fair Trade Parish.

We are currently working on promoting the Bishop's Covenant with the Poor, an initiative taken by Bishop Peter to remind us of the needs of the poor of the world and our need to provide them with whatever help and support we can manage. We are hoping this may lead to the parish twinning with a Carmelite parish in Malawi where the levels of poverty are such that any help we can give would be beneficial. A short presentation promoting this is planned for the parish AGM.

### **Cameroon Education Fund (*Christine Cornwell*)**

Over the past twelve months our parish has kindly donated approx £7,000 to support the education of the orphaned and vulnerable children in both primary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Kumbo, Cameroon. In a recent letter to Fr John, Ephraim and Theresia expressed their sincere gratitude for our continued support for these children and for their ministry in the Family Life Apostolate in Kumbo. The number of orphans continues to rise and our support is crucial. Thank you for your generosity over the years.

*Stephen Forster*  
Outreach Activity Group Leader

# Pastoral Activity Group

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Herewith my report for period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012 covering the activities of the following working groups: St Vincent de Paul and the Ministry for the Disabled.

We have continued our commitment to help those in need in the parish with visiting, taking communion, help with transportation to Mass, hospital visits as well as provide practical assistance and advice where appropriate. Over the past 18 months we have carried out over 1,200 visits within the parish.

## Volunteers

- The St Josephs SVP group currently has 9 members; in addition we have 6 Auxiliary members and 1 Honorary member. 14 drivers assist us with transport to Mass.
- The Youth Group at St Josephs is in the process of forming a Youth SVP.
- SVP Awareness month in September will aid awareness of SVP activities, help with recruitment of new members and fundraising.

## Highlights of past year

- SVP St Josephs hosted a District Festival Meeting.
- Our bi-monthly coffee mornings continue to bring together people within the Parish.
- We took 30 people to the theatre last December to see the panto, 'Snow White'.
- SVP hosted a special 'Coronation Tea Party' in July.
- We have become twinned with another SVP group in Southern India.

*Janet Bridden*  
Pastoral Activity Group Leader

## **Social Activity Group**

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Herewith, my report for the period ended September 2013 covering the activities of the following Working Groups:

### **Events Team (*Tony Hetherington*)**

The events team organise parish social activities with an objective of "Fun, Family and Finance". The main event is Parish Day and Raffle in May which involves all the Parish groups running stalls and many parishioners supporting the event. The weather has been kind and the day has been a great success in 2012 and 2013. Other events last year included Quiz Nights, St Patrick's Irish Night, Bingo, Mulled Wine and Mince Pies after the Carol Service. The events team also organise the bar for these occasions and for private parties which last year included Fr Martin's Leaving Social. All bar profits are donated to the parish.

The events team is very grateful for the support they received across the parish in helping with and attending events. We are always looking for more people to be involved on ad-hoc events or as part of the team. We also welcome new ideas for events and have expertise and equipment to support new initiatives.

Events to the year end March 2013 raised over £11,900 which was donated to parish funds and was used for church improvements to the heating and telephone system.

### **Tea in the Pot (*Nan Jacobson*)**

Provides an opportunity to socialise for parents who bring their children to St Joseph's playgroup and school. Provides coffee, tea, bacon butties, pancakes and delicious bacon rolls during school term time. All profits made are donated to charities such as Cafod, SVP, London Run, Marie Curie. Also provides a ready made customer base for cakes sales etc.

### **9am & 11am Coffee Rotas (*9am-Di Waite, 11am-Agnes Johnson*)**

Serves tea, coffee and biscuits after 9am and 11am mass every Sunday.

Provides an opportunity for parishioners to socialise after mass and a customer base for ad-hoc stalls for cake-sales, FairTrade, etc.

## **Volunteers**

Additional Volunteers requested for Coffee Rotas, ideally those who regularly attend 9am or 11am mass. They would only be required about 6 times a year. Tea in the Pot currently has enough volunteers.

A big thank you to David Bentley, Maria Byrne and Caroline Sargeant who stepped down from the Events Team last year. We are always looking for "new blood" with "new ideas".

## **General**

There is Dance Night on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October with excellent local band Cool Beanz.

Also as the parish orchard is likely to produce a bumper crop this year, we will be holding an apple harvest day in October to collect apples to make St Josephs Organic Apple Juice. This will be available for sale after mass in late October.

*Tony Hetherington*  
Social Activity Group Leader

# Youth Activity Group

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## **2012/2013**

*Children's Liturgy* – A thriving liturgy group at the 9.00 am Sunday mass covering age groups 4 – 11 years old. Between 60 / 70 children per week regularly attend the breakout groups.

*First Confession and Holy Communion* – 78 children received the sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion. This included children attending St Joseph's School making their preparations for the sacraments at school and children attending other schools make their sacramental preparation via Children's Catechism on Sunday mornings during 9am Mass.

*Youth Ministry* – 48 young people in Year 9 or above were confirmed after a ten week learning programme which included 480 hours of service supporting the parish, local community and charities.

Youth Ministry organised the annual Senior Citizens Christmas Party and Parish BBQ. Over 70 senior citizens from the parish and surrounding care homes enjoyed an excellent afternoon of hospitality and entertainment. The Parish BBQ raised over £400 for Youth ministry funds with over 100 parishioners enjoying a lovely evening. The youth section at Parish day was a real success and raised over £500.

Youth Council was instigated and organised two events; a bingo and a film night. 3 young people from our parish went to Lourdes with the Northampton Diocese.

Our youth worker Saumya Jacob went on maternity leave in September and Michael Ellul provided maternity cover from mid November 2012.

## **2013/14**

*Children's Liturgy* – The children's liturgy after 9.00am Sunday continues and the main change is sessions will be run throughout the year, including half terms and holidays. The big children's group event is Advent Workshop planned for the First Sunday of Advent on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

*First Confession and Holy Communion* – In autumn, those in Year 3 or above are invited to register for the programme.

*Youth Ministry* - An exciting new programme has been developed and the highlights are:-

- Year 6: Our Youth Worker will be more closely involved at our school and will attend different masses across the parish to engage with those young people not at St Josephs.
- Year 7 & 8 Youth Groups: Helping to form them in faith as young Catholics. Engaging the groups in all youth ministry opportunities and enabling them to take responsibility for their community.
- Year 9 Sacramental Preparation: The programme has been revised following feedback to better serve the confirmandi; monthly sessions will be held on Friday evenings, leaving space for reflection and allows parents to keep Sundays back for family time. The Confirmation Mass is planned in June 2014.
- Year 10-13: a number of different opportunities will be available including Youth Council and Youth SVP. We are hoping to offer leadership Training as well as DoE opportunities.

*Music Matters* – Pulling together musicians and singers from across the parish, we will be meeting monthly to play together and share some social time. Watch this space!

*Youth Masses/Events* – Five Youth Masses/events are planned; National Youth Sunday, Advent, Easter, Pentecost, End of Term Thanksgiving.

In addition, our youth worker will be reaching out to other local church youth workers to identify and organise joint event(s) for young people.

*Paul Rayner*  
Youth Activity Group Leader

# Mass Representatives

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## Background

As part of the ongoing improvement in communication and “openness” within St Josephs Parish, a number of regular attendees at each of the Masses within the Parish were asked to assist in the launch of this initiative in early 2013 and be a mass representative for those members of the Parish who attend the same Sunday mass.

Once the role of “Mass Representative” has been established in the Parish the congregation attending the relevant mass will subsequently select these representatives.

The spokesperson of the Mass Representatives is a member of St Joseph’s Parish Council.

## Mass Representatives

Doreen Pooley	Saturday	5.30pm
Desmond Francis	Sunday	7.45am
John Moroz	Sunday	9.00am
Chris Gaskill	Sunday	11.00am
Mary Forsyth	Sunday	5.30pm
Michael Carney	Chalfont St Giles	
Phyllis Smith	Denham	
Joseph Kumar	Brigettine Convent, Iver Heath	

Michael Carney was selected by the representatives to be their spokesperson on the Parish Council.

Main duties of the Mass Representative and their teams:

- To be available to Mass attendees before and after Mass
- To organise “Meet and Greet”, distribute and collect hymn books, newsletters, etc
- Identify new congregation members
- Act as conduit if required between mass attendees and the parish, parish council and clergy
- Be informed of what is happening in the parish
- Make parish announcements

## **Progress to Date**

The initiative was launched in April 2013 and has generally been well received and the role of Mass Representative will continue to develop and improve as we go forward.

The Mass representatives were in attendance for "Sign up Sunday" in May 2013 and also for the Parish Day in July 2013.

In September 2013 they commenced making the Parish Announcements at the end of Sunday Mass and distributed the letter informing the Parish of the thoughts relating to the Centenary Celebrations in 2015.

*Michael Carney*  
Mass Representatives

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*Registered Charity Number 234091*