



2019 Annual Report



Parish Prayer

Lord, you who said:

“Behold I make all things new”

Send forth your Spirit and
renew the heart of your parish.
Renew what is weary and worn.
Restore what is old and fragile.

Reclaim what has been lost.

Fill us anew with your gifts.

Gifts to love, gifts to heal.
So that we, in turn, may help
others to know and love you.

Amen.

Dear Parishioners,

This Annual Report is produced to provide information to newcomers and parishioners of the diverse activities conducted within the parish.

The parish has two churches, St Joseph's in Gerrards Cross and The Holy Name in Denham, which have been served by the Carmelite Community for over 100 years. We are thankful for their dedicated service and I urge you to keep them in your prayers.

There are many lively and dedicated groups within the parish which are run by parishioners who willingly give of their time to help others, within and outside, the church community. Representatives of those groups are members of the Parish Council.

I encourage newcomers and parishioners to read the contents of this Annual Report as a means of coming to know the parish better. A very brief summary of particular points to note are:

- Instruction and support to those who desire to become Catholics and those who wish to explore and develop their faith,
- Work to train and develop our young persons,
- Planning of liturgical celebrations throughout the year,
- Church cleaning and decorating with wonderful floral displays,
- Support and assistance to the less fortunate within our parish community and to those within the wider community,
- Contributions of time to organise various social events and raise funds,
- Financial support by Gift Aid, donations and weekly collections without which our parish would not continue to develop.

For those of you who are not currently involved with parish activities PLEASE speak to members of the group(s) who will welcome your interest and support.

We thank God for the support of the Carmelite Community and for their encouragement and assistance in times of need. May I ask you to reciprocate by praying for our past and present priests and to support them in their ministry.

I thank all those involved in the parish activities for their long standing commitment and support. May God bless you all.

Yours sincerely,

John Bates
Chairman, St Joseph's Parish Council

Carmelite Community



St Joseph's Carmelite Community – Fr Michael, Fr Maurice, Fr Bob and Fr Matt

Though we are without an Events Team St Joseph's occurs to me as an eventful place. Even on the duller days in the year, there is energy around. It's social and spiritual and I detect a deep love for the parish and much work being done.

The Sacramental Teams work enthusiastically from the Baptismal Programme through First Communion Preparation to the Confirmation Classes and Marriage Preparation.

Fr Matt Blake has been a blessing to the parish with the scripture and Lent courses - a unique addition and there have been healthy attendances. And just recently we had an imaginative and contemporary portrayal of the Psalms, put together by Robert Barham. In September we joined our friends at St Mary's, celebrating their patronal feast day with "*Hymns & Pimms*". Last June Roy Schoeman - a Jewish convert to Catholicism - gave us a learned and insightful evening on the faith journey.

It seems a long year ago that a group of our parishioners and myself, together with three of the Bridgettine Sisters, attended Adoremus in Liverpool. As a result of that conference we decided to do a monthly two hours of Adoration in the church. This will continue to year ending and it's gratifying to see folks filtering in during the hours and adoring the Blessed Sacrament. Many is the time I'm boosted at the presence of a figure in silent prayer.

Parish Day was much fun and jollity. The Parish Golf Day had a decent turnout. It would be so pleasing to be able to put together a Parish Christmas Dinner.

Sadly some faithful parishioners have joined the faithful departed and we miss them very much. Our Memorial Wall has been blessed and is already occupied and looks really well.

There were issues with the roof of our church and the tower and the Diocese has taken responsibility for the amendments. And please God, we will be able to expand our car parking space. There are now three disabled parking spaces and our local residents association have been helpful in alerting the parish to the impact of inconsiderate parking. We are improving our forecasting of traffic volume but we didn't manage to procure structural change from the Council with the plans that we forwarded.

The Infant of Prague Church has finally been sold to Word of God International Church. They have yet to engage with local residents on parking habits, and maybe a little surplus cash will be available soon.

We applied to HS2 for a grant. They were advertising their support for local projects but hope is fading for that hard to find million that would give a major boost to getting ourselves and new hall and social centre. As you know, HS2 is not as assured to happen as heretofore.

In the New Year we've been promised a new Community member at Gerrards Cross - Fr John Williamson. We are expecting a new cook this month and the "*Mikes on Bikes*" are preparing for a major cycle next June - USA (west to east). More later. The Carmelite Chapter takes place from 4 to 20 May 2020 - Fr Maurice knows more than any of us on this topic.

Parish grounds have become greener and more manageable. It would be lovely to think that Pope Francis' aspirations in "*Laudato Si*" would become familiar to us and perhaps an item of conversation. Ged Nolan and Mike Burton are but two parishioners with constructive and progressive views and helpful "could do's".

2020 has been designated as a year in celebration of "*The God Who Speaks*". Scripture, the Bible, the Word of God - whatever we like to call it - is at the centre of everything the Church does. It's in our prayer and worship, how we understand the world, how we are called to live and how we relate to each other. To help achieve transformation in our hearts and in our communities there will be three themes of **celebrating**, **living** and **sharing** God's word.

Remember - Grace before and after meals. Use the holy water font entering and leaving the church - why not at home too? October is an extraordinary month of mission - think mission, remember prayerfully the universal mission of the church.

Fr Michael Spain
Prior & Parish Priest

Finance Committee

YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2019

I am pleased to report that our accounts as at 31st March 2019 showed an operating profit of £15,999. Income of £268,296 was down by around £48,000 which was approximately the amount of legacies that were received in the previous year. However an additional amount of £15,000 was received from raffles, 200 Club etc. Expenditure was some £34,000 lower at £252,298 as no church refurbishment expenses were incurred during the year. The Financial Statement is shown at the end of this report.

GIFT AID

Thanks are again due to parishioners for their continued generosity however I feel we are missing a great opportunity to increase our income without placing any additional burden on donors. Just under 30% of our current offertory income is not gift aided and it would make a considerable difference to us if the tax already paid by donors could be reclaimed for the parish.

Figures for the current half year to June 2019 show a total offertory amount of £90,200 of which only £64,600 is gift aided.

Gift aiding donations has the effect of increasing contributions by 25%, making each pound donated worth £1.25. If you do not currently gift aid your donations it would be greatly appreciated if you would consider doing so. If you need to know how please contact the Parish Office.

EVENTS INCOME

The 200 Club continues to make a valuable contribution towards our general administration costs. Cathy Vennix has worked very hard to increase numbers and at the time of writing she has raised the number of participants to 166 - a great result. The income from the club is divided equally between prize winners and the parish. Please join if you can and help Cathy get to 200.

Our Summer Fete (Parish Day) is always a very enjoyable event and brings in welcome income for the parish. Once again we are indebted to Celia Tobin and Christine Gosling for organising the day and for all the volunteers who help before, on and after the event and to all those who donate prizes and sale items.

THE FURNITURE MARKET

The Furniture Market is another reliable and valuable source of income for the parish. This year the hard-working volunteers who run the market contributed £14,900 towards our running costs. A similar amount was distributed to many other good causes during the year. For those not familiar with the market, a good variety of donated furniture is available each Saturday morning at the market

located behind the Cemetery and arrangements can be made to collect and deliver items. St Joseph's Furniture Market is the envy of many other parishes in our Diocese and we are fortunate and grateful to all the volunteers who work so hard for the good of our parish. New volunteers are always very welcome either for Saturday mornings or an evening during the week for collections.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance costs this year at £20,066 were similar to last year. The sale of the Holy Infant of Prague has now at last been completed. The availability of the sale proceeds for parish use is due to be discussed by the Diocesan Trustees at their October meeting.

CHURCH REFURBISHMENT

The last of the remedial work on the church roof has now been completed. The cost of these works was provided by Diocese. There is some further work that the parish will need to undertake within the church tower.

In order to improve the sound quality in the church it has been agreed to install acoustic panels on the church ceiling and an estimate for the work has been accepted. This work will involve some disruption inside the church where it is planned to close each side of the church in turn during installation. Once the work has been completed the sound quality will be re-assessed before embarking on any further improvement to the system that may be required.

PROJECTS

- **The Chantry Chapel and Our Lady's Altar** - Specialised cleaning of the original marble and mosaics of the Chantry Chapel and professional cleaning and repairs of Our Lady's Altar and mosaics remain as projects for the future.
- **Cemetery Memorial Wall and Gate** - The new Cemetery Memorial Wall has now been completed. A Blessing Ceremony has taken place. The wall has 114 double vaults for the interment of ashes and there is also space for 80 memorial plaques. Vaults and memorial plaques can now be purchased by parishioners and forms are available from the Parish Office. We are still intending to replace the existing cemetery gate after planning permission is granted. The area between the hall and the cemetery has now been levelled and the hedge has been cut back to allow safe exit from the hall.
- **Parish Hall and Centre** - The previous parish wide consultation did not result in any majority result for the proposed options which were set out. Any new build would involve a considerable amount of funding (currently not available to us) as well as Diocese approval. However the committee do now feel that a new build should be our aim rather than spending on piecemeal improvement works to an old building. We are therefore working to produce a plan for a new building and to see if any potential donors would be

interested in supporting the project. No firm commitment will be made until we have given parishioners full details and allowed adequate consultation time.

- **The Holy Name in Denham** - This needs to have some refurbishment and redecoration work and the committee is currently looking at a list of such works and costing them.

Various other works have been undertaken during the year and more are planned, in the main relating to Health and Safety issues.

THANKS

Considerable savings are achieved due to all those who generously give their time to the parish. The volunteers who hand deliver correspondence, the cleaners who keep our church looking so good and the flower arrangers who adorn the sanctuary with such beautiful arrangements.

Finally, thanks to all the members of the committee who give up so much of their time to carry out the many tasks they are asked to complete. Thanks also go to Fathers Michael, Bob, Maurice and Matt for their support and spiritual guidance. Grateful thanks to Helena Sullivan now enjoying a well earned retirement and to Joan Barham, Karen Peters and Barbara Kelly for their patience and good humour despite the numerous calls on their time. Also many thanks to Mary Forsyth for the considerable time she spends on safeguarding, youth, and with Joan, preparing our new web site.

We are indeed blessed in having so many willing and talented hands. Long may it continue to benefit our parish.

Kevin Murphy

Chairman, St Joseph's Finance Committee

Financial Statement

YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2019

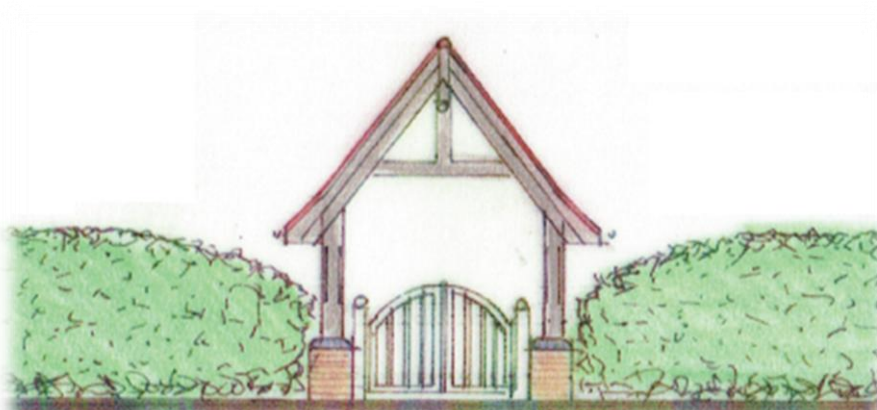
	Year to March 2019	Year to March 2018
INCOME		
Offertory Thro'parish	132,443	133,825
Thro' diocese	49,755	50,502
Tax Refunds	<u>22,806</u>	<u>29,345</u>
	205,003	213,672
Rental Income	14,506	14,062
Fundraising	19,849	23,795
Furniture Market	14,900	17,950
Events Team		14,465
Together in Faith	-783	2,333
Stole Fees	8,074	8,051
Legacies and Donations	4,495	52,647
Repository	<u>2,252</u>	<u>4,515</u>
	63,293	138,035
TOTAL INCOME	<u>268,296</u>	<u>351,707</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Liturgical	16,546	14,250
Domestic	81	327
Establishment	62,411	53,906
Insurance	5,327	5,098
Office	5,933	5,995
Travel	57	374
Carmelites	20,000	20,000
Personnel	74,209	70,174
Property/Maintenance	14,158	20,638
Fixed Assets	5,908	7,226
Fundraising Costs	851	1,665
Repository	5,650	7,064
Diocese Levy	34,814	33,941
Church Refurbishment		35,910
NCF/CES/CYS Levies	2,306	2,020
Misc/Donations	2,567	4,667
Interest	<u>1,479</u>	<u>3,144</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>252,298</u>	<u>286,399</u>
Surplus/Deficit of Income over Expenditure	<u>15,999</u>	<u>65,308</u>
Surplus/Deficit Net of TIF/Legacy	16,782	46,021

	<i>Year to March 2019</i>	<i>Year to March 2018</i>
CAPITAL ACCOUNT		
Balance b/f at 1 April 2018	-46,221	-111,529
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year to Date	15,999	65,308
	<u>-30,222</u>	<u>-46,221</u>
Represented by:		
Cash and Bank	18,955	17,522
Less Accruals re Restricted Receipts	-1,022	-3,435
Due from/(to) Diocese	48,155	<u>-60,308</u>
	<u>-30,222</u>	<u>-46,221</u>



St Joseph's Catholic Cemetery Memorial Wall

Application Forms for Vaults and Plaques
available from the Parish Office.



Safeguarding and Health & Safety

The Finance Committee, on behalf of the Parish Priest, oversees Health & Safety, Safeguarding and the church maintenance and improvement program.

Health & Safety policy is formulated within the Diocese to provide practices and processes within the parish to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those involved in church activities or who use the church facilities.

Safeguarding, which complements Health & Safety, covers the practices and processes 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.

It is the responsibility of all to ensure their own safety, the safety of those for whom they are responsible and for those who are less able or vulnerable.

Whilst many improvements have been made over the years Health & Safety and Safeguarding are continual processes which require monitoring to ensure a safe environment.

Thanks to those who assist with the Health and Safety Inspections, the carrying out of general improvement works and all those who assist in ensuring a safe environment for the young and vulnerable persons.

John Bates

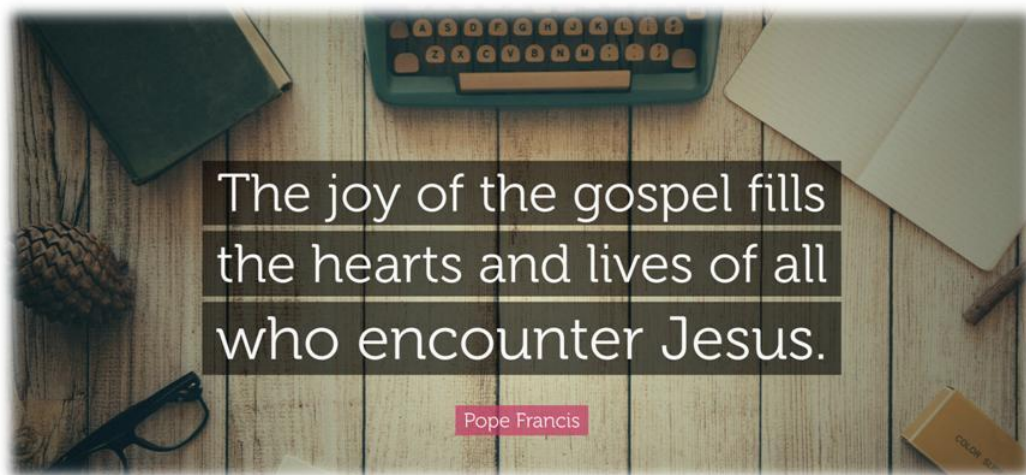
Safeguarding and Health & Safety

OVERFLOW CAR PARKING

We have made arrangements with St Joseph's School to use their grounds for overflow car parking. If St Joseph's Church car park is full when you arrive for Mass please use the facilities at the school – the gates will be open. Please do not park on Priory Road, Priory Way or The Rowans.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Evangelisation



Our group wishes to incorporate our Pope's desire that evangelisation should be part of everything we do as a parish community, and that sometimes there will be events and activities open to all that are specifically evangelistic in their content and presentation.

In the words of Pope Francis in Section 28 of *The Joy of the Gospel*:

"The parish is not an outdated institution, precisely because it possesses great flexibility it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community."

ADULT FAITH FORMATION (Sally Taylor/Maureen Connell/Christine Cornwell)

To grow in our faith and understanding, the parish offers opportunities to attend various short courses where people come together in fellowship to learn through study and shared experience.

Last October the CaFE Course "*Let It Be*" was presented over five weekly sessions. Fr Matt Blake gave us a greater insight into "*The Gospel of St Luke*" over four weekly sessions at the beginning of 2019. During Lent, Fr Matt helped us to understand in a new way "*The Sacrament of Reconciliation*" over two weeks. In the period before Pentecost we studied "*The Book of Acts*" with Fr Matt over four weeks.

We also responded to The Bishops Conference of England and Wales who produced a CaFE DVD on "*GLOBAL HEALING - How our faith helps us care for our common home - A practical response*". www.ourcommonhome.co.uk. Two sessions were held which produced a desire and an enthusiasm to act. The Parish Council agreed that we should think of finding new ways to become a 'greener' parish.

Over the past year participants have seemed to enjoy the combination of growing in faith while making new friends.

Coming up:

- This October Fr Matt has kindly agreed to share his deep understandings of the Scriptures by presenting three sessions on “*Understanding the Bible*”. This will be in preparation of the Year of the Word: The God Who Speaks which will be marked in 2020 on the instigation of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales. See www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks.
- In January 2020 Fr Matt will then help us to participate more fully in the liturgy of Year A by offering four sessions on “*The Gospel of St Matthew*”.
- There are also plans to offer a six week “*Life in the Spirit Seminar*” between Easter and Pentecost next year with the aim of helping people of all ages to encounter the Holy Spirit and be empowered to share their faith.

All courses are run both on an evening and a morning and details can be obtained from the Parish Office, found on the parish website and in the newsletter. Everyone is welcome.

BAPTISM (*Christine Cornwell*)

The Baptismal formation sessions now run five times a year for parents bringing their child(ren) for Baptism. We usually have up to 8/9 couples per session but our current sessions have 12, which is the largest group we have ever had.

The three sessions are an excellent opportunity for us to welcome our young families into the parish. The purpose of the sessions is to try to encourage them to think about the importance of their own Baptism and what it means for them to have their own children baptised. The parents really appreciate the informal, friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the chance to meet other young couples and their children. We are encouraged by the number of families that we see returning to weekly Mass.

The process of formation involves the following roles:

- **Enquiry Meeting** - Parents meet with a priest and a catechist who welcome the family and outline the aims of the formation.
- **Rite of Welcome** - This takes place at the 9am Sunday Mass on the first week of the formation. Parents are invited to renew their own Baptismal promises and are presented with a family bible.
- **Formation Sessions** - Three sessions, each of one hour. Two catechists lead the session, two take sibling children separately and do activities with them, which are appropriate to their age. Others provide refreshments.

- **Liturgy Preparation** -A short evening session where we go through the forthcoming Baptismal celebration and ask parents to select readings for the occasion.
- **Baptismal Celebration** - One or two members of the Baptismal team will normally attend each communal baptismal celebration to welcome the families.

We are a small team and would welcome some new members, particularly to help with the older children whilst their parents attend the formation sessions. If you would be interested in helping with any phase of the Baptismal formation then please speak to Fr Michael or contact our Baptismal Co-ordinator via the Parish Office.

I would personally like to thank our current team members who have faithfully served in this ministry since 2014. Their commitment has provided continuity and parents are always encouraged by the personal witness of our catechists. We also very much appreciate the support and encouragement we receive from our priests. I look forward to hearing from anyone who might be interested in joining our team.

ECUMENICAL (*Fr Michael Spain/Sally Taylor*)

Fr Michael joins the leaders of all the churches in the area who meet every month to pray together.

Last November there was a Mission run by one of the churches and those involved in leadership gathered each morning in our Parish Centre for prayer and refreshments.

On Good Friday the annual Walk of Witness from St Peter's Church in the village to St Joseph's Church where the Stations of the Cross took place.

MENS GROUP (*Mike Burton*)

This group grew from the Harvesters annual Men's Weekend retreats, as a way for men to continue sharing and exploring their faith throughout the year after the retreat. For many years, men from St Joseph's and other nearby parishes such as Great Missenden, Uxbridge and Ruislip have met together at St Joseph's. Recently, meetings have moved to Our Lady of Lourdes and St Michael's Catholic Church in Uxbridge.

We meet every month for a shared meal, fellowship and a Bible Study discussion of some kind. Of 18 total members we usually have 8-12 at each meeting.

On a practical level we occasionally help the nearby Catholic Worker Farm with manual tasks like setting up marquees for their summer events, and would be keen

to help other groups in similar ways. Please contact us via the Parish Office if you know of such a need, or if you would like to join us.

PILGRIMAGES

The Dowry Tour of Our Lady of Walsingham has been touring Cathedrals around the country in preparation for the Rededication of England as the Dowry of Mary (www.dowrytour.org.uk). This is to coincide with The Year of the Word - The God Who Speaks. Fr Matt and three parishioners travelled to Northampton Cathedral when the Tour was there in February.

We are invited to listen afresh to the word of God as did our Blessed Mother at the Annunciation when she was invited to be the Mother of God and she said 'Yes'. So too are we invited to open our hearts to the Word and the call of the Father, to say our 'Yes' and to do His will. To proclaim the Gospel afresh in the Church and to the World.

"A moment of great promise...for the Church in this
country and for our mission."
Cardinal Vincent Nichols

PRAYER MINISTRY (*Maureen Connell*)

Prayer ministry has been offered throughout the year after the 9am Mass every Sunday. Prayer takes place in the Oratory and all are welcome. The focus is on encouraging people to sense the presence of Jesus and to find His love, forgiveness and healing in whatever situation they find themselves. The couples who pray each week offer welcome, acceptance and confidentiality.

Links have been made with The Christian Healing Mission in Hammersmith, who offer training and support for prayer ministers and lead retreats and prayer days.

It can be a great encouragement to have other people pray with us.

FOR WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE
GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME
There I am in the midst of them.
MATTHEW 18:20

Sally Taylor
Evangelisation Forum

Liturgy & Church

The Liturgy & Church Forum currently does not have a representative on the Parish Council. If you are a member of any of the groups listed and would consider undertaking this role, please speak with Fr Michael.

This forum comprises the following groups:

- Eucharistic Ministers (Ros Burton)
- Mass Readers (Des Francis, Robert Thompson, Mary Forsyth, Kevin Murphy)
- Church Cleaning (Fiona Davitt)
- Bookshop & Repository (Ros Burton, Margie Carter, Marie Godfrey)
- Sacristan Team (Alex Trillo, Ros Burton, Therese Lawton)
- The Most Holy Name (Sarah Hampel)

MUSIC *(Joan Barham)*

Thank you to the many singers and musicians who have provided music at our Sunday Masses, our celebrations of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost as well as our sacramental liturgies for Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Music provision during Sunday Mass:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 9am | Nan Jacobson and the Children's Choir |
| 9:30am | Richard Cottle and the Holy Name Choir |
| 11am | Louise Langley and Choir |
| 5:30pm | Virginie Penney and Music Group |

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION *(Joan Barham)*

Thank you to those parishioners who sit with the Blessed Sacrament throughout the year. In the peace and quiet of the Oratory, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on Wednesdays and Thursdays where you are invited to spend time resting, reading or praying in the presence of the Lord. Currently we only have skeleton cover and sadly for some hours we have no volunteers so the Blessed Sacrament has to be put away. Can you offer one hour of your time once a week? Or even once a fortnight? For more information please contact the Parish Office.

ROSARY CIRCLE (*Christine Cornwell*)

The Rosary Circle is a small group which meets on Tuesday and Friday evenings at 7:30pm for only 30 mins in the Oratory to pray the Rosary together. At present there are only about 12 people and we would welcome more members. Please feel free to come and join us when you are able to. You will be most welcome.

In praying the Rosary *"...our heart can embrace in the decades of the Rosary all the events that make up the lives of individuals, families, nations, the Church, and all mankind. Our personal concerns and those of our neighbour, especially those who are closest to us, who are dearest to us. Thus the simple prayer of the Rosary marks the rhythm of human life."* Rosarium Virginis Mariae p2

The Rosary is the perfect prayer to pray communally for the needs and intentions of our parish and the wider world.

"With the Rosary, the Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer." Rosarium Virginis Mariae p1

FLOWER ARRANGERS (*Maureen Murphy*)

The Flower Arranging team has continued to decorate the altar each week on a rota basis during this year with special attention to the three Holy Communion and Confirmation celebrations. The team do not feel they have the time or the manpower to do large wedding arrangements any longer. We are indebted to the parish for giving so generously to the Christmas and Easter flower collections.

For the past eight years I have been the co-ordinator of this team but at the January meeting of the flower arrangers I informed them that although willing to remain in the group I was resigning as the co-ordinator on 1st December 2019. To date nobody has agreed to take on this role. It is with sadness that I must report that Eileen Carkett is resigning from the team at the end of year. She has been a stalwart member for many years and her expertise will be greatly missed by us all.

*Thank
You*

to everyone who helps keep our church
in good order and looking beautiful.

SITUATION VACANT

Liturgy & Church Forum

Outreach

The Outreach Forum currently does not have a representative on the Parish Council. If you are a member of any of the groups listed and would consider undertaking this role, please speak with Fr Michael.

This forum comprises the following groups:

- London and Slough Run (Eugene Walsh)
www.thelondonandsloughrun.com
- SHOC - Slough Homeless Our Concern (Ray Waite)
- Traidcraft (Eileen Carkett)
www.traidcraft.co.uk
- Catholic Women's League, Gerrards Cross Branch (Jane Dawson)
- Justice and Peace (Sister Mary Christa)

CHALFONT ST PETER LIFE GROUP *(Sally Taylor)*

Life is unique in the UK (www.lifecharity.org.uk), and Chalfont St Peter Life Group was set up in 1974 here at St Joseph's Church. In 2018, in response to new GDPR regulations and restructuring of the Life Charity nationally, we decided to transition to a more informal group, '*Friends of Life*' who continue to support the Life Charity as well as being involved in a broad range of pro-life issues.

Thanks to a generous legacy left to the charity by a parishioner, a new Life Charity Boutique opened in Gerrards Cross in April this year. The shop has been received very positively by the local community - currently a new manager and assistant manager are being recruited. We encourage and receive many donations of clothes, baby goods, etc to sell in the shop. We will contribute to the success of the shop in any way we can; enabling it to be both financially viable as well as a witness to the help the Life Charity offers to mothers, fathers and babies - born and unborn.

We continue to monitor what is happening politically and respond as we are able by signing petitions and writing letters. There are many forces in government and some very powerful lobby groups pushing to liberalise abortion, both here and in Northern Ireland. There is an ever present threat to the legal protection of the unborn and our opposition needs to be heard because the child in the womb has no voice.

We meet once every two months and anyone who may be interested in joining us can get in touch through the Parish Office. If anyone wishes to volunteer to help out in the Life Boutique, sorting donations and helping customers, please call into the shop on Station Road in Gerrards Cross and enquire. If anyone is able to travel a bit further, the Life Caring Centre in Hounslow welcomes volunteers to help in various ways.

"Only respect for life can be the foundation and guarantee of the most precious and essential goods of society, such as democracy and peace."

Extract from *Evangelium Vitae* by Pope John Paul II

CAMEROON EDUCATION FUND (*Christine Cornwell*)

The situation in the English speaking provinces of Cameroon continues to deteriorate. The tensions between government forces and separatists fighting for independence for the English speaking provinces have escalated.

In March 2019 we received a letter from the Family Life Apostolate (FLA) in the Diocese of Kumbo. They told us that most of the schools still remain closed as it is too dangerous for the children to go to school. This is now the fourth year that the majority of schools have been closed. They urgently asked us if they could use some of the funds we had already sent to them to support the Internally Displaced People (IDP) in the Diocese as so many people have been left homeless or are without the means to support themselves.

Later that month we held our annual appeal. This time our focus was to continue to support the IDPs in the Diocese of Kumbo. Our appeal raised £3,591.93. In addition monies which had been donated by regular standing orders over a period of time amounted to £4,330 and our regular donors kindly gave their permission for this money also to be used to support those displaced by the tensions in Kumbo. Thus a grand total of £7,921.93 was sent to the Mill Hill Missionaries in April for the account of the Family Life Apostolate in Kumbo.

The Family Life Apostolate continues to support as many people as it can during in their very difficult circumstances. Internet communication continues to be difficult so we have not yet received any further news from the FLA. We have had occasional phone calls from Ephraim to reassure us that he and his family are all right. However, they are now spending several days a week in Bamenda where the troubles seem to be less severe and supplies are more readily available.

Please continue to keep the people of Cameroon in your prayers. Your continued support is very much appreciated.

SITUATION VACANT

Outreach Forum

Pastoral

The Vision of the SVP, which is inspired by Christ's message to love our neighbour as ourselves, is for individuals and families who are in any form of need to have hope together with a sense of dignity, worth, well-being and peace of mind. This September's annual Awareness Month, simply themed "*Love Your Neighbour*", has been highlighted in the bulletins and notice board and shows how the SVP in Britain carries out this vision. SVP National President Helen O'Shea said at the Annual Conference held in June of this year: "*The world is in a poor state at the moment, with loneliness, conflict, hunger and homelessness rife not only in the UK, and in many other countries around the world where the SVP is present*".

Through face-to-face visits, members are called to encounter Christ, God Himself, present and hidden amongst the poor.

"We should fall at their feet and say alongside the Apostle: 'You are our masters and we are your servants, you are for us the sacred image of a God that we cannot see, and in not knowing how to otherwise love, we will love you as individuals'".

Blessed Frederic Ozanam – Founder of the SVP

Within St Joseph's, the SVP carries out the mission of the Society by providing support to the disadvantaged, poor and vulnerable in our parish. One of the most important elements of our activity is home visits to the housebound and lonely. Almost 400 such visits were conducted in our parish over the last twelve months, providing much-welcomed social interaction and practical everyday assistance like small household tasks and transport to medical appointments, shopping, parish events, etc.

Other activities undertaken in the past year included:

- Holding an Autumn Garden Party for beneficiaries and a Pancake Morning on Shrove Tuesday for all parishioners. The former had previously been held in the summer, but following the success of this event, it will be held in the autumn in the future. It is particularly pleasing that thanks to additional support we were able to hold these events, unlike last year when we regretfully had to abandon plans.
- Arranging a Mass with the Sacrament of Anointing, held during Advent. This has now become an annual event, greatly appreciated by all who may be in need of healing in one form or another.

- Providing the Catholic Worker farm with a large-scale washing machine to meet their needs. This was possible thanks to a legacy generously left to the SVP by a parishioner.
- Part-funding, in conjunction with the Lourdes Society and again using legacy funds, four parishioners to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes.
- Working with St Joseph's School to distribute hampers collected by the children and staff to those most in need at Christmas, and arranging the donation of Giving Tree gifts from the Children's Liturgy Group.
- Providing material assistance (clothing, food and small items of furniture) to our most needy parishioners on some 38 occasions.
- Donation of SVP homeless packs containing essential winter supplies, to the London & Slough Run.

Finally, but by no means lastly, another very important activity is the provision of transport to Mass. Lifts were provided on over 240 occasions; this would not be possible without the loyal team of drivers providing regular Sunday Mass transport.

We are pleased to say that two new members have stepped forward to support the work tirelessly done by a small handful of long-standing members. However, we are still desperately in need of more members to continue this work. All our visits and other activities are done on an ad hoc basis, fitting around the work and other commitments of our members. If you feel that you can help, and any assistance at all will make a genuine difference, please contact the Parish Office in the first instance.

As Cardinal Vincent Nichols said in an interview in the Catholic Times, *"I treasure the SVP because it is strong in its identification with Christ, seeing the person of Christ, our Blessed Lord, in the face of the poor. And if you think you are serving your Lord in the poor then you are on your toes. You want to do it very well. And I think that is what SVP members seek to do."*

Kasia Misiewicz
Pastoral Forum

"We should strive to keep our hearts open to the suffering and wretchedness of other people and pray continually that God may grant us that spirit of compassion which is truly the spirit of God".

St Vincent

Social

TEA IN THE POT (*Nan Jacobson*)

The café which is open on Wednesdays and Fridays continues to attract mothers of the children attending St Joseph's School and other mothers whose children have left the school, but they enjoy the company and the chat. A few fathers and grandfathers enjoy the social occasion. We are pleased that some of the parents who heard about the London Run now go up to London on a Monday night.

New Reception children, whose mothers now come alone to Tea in the Pot, are most upset that they have to go to school and miss their play and biscuits at Tea in the Pot.

REFRESHMENTS AFTER 9AM MASS (*Di Waite*)

The Parish Centre is a hub of activity after the 9am Mass. Parents, young couples, elderly couples all meet together, chat and often eat delicious homemade cakes.

Children play and, on occasions, there are games and parties organised by the Children's Liturgy Group. New parishioners are made welcome and make new friends.

A large group of volunteers are to be thanked for making this possible.

REFRESHMENTS AFTER 11AM MASS

Parishioners like to meet and chat in the First Committee Room where tea, coffee and biscuits are most welcome. Volunteers are needed to provide this service.

SUMMER FETE – PARISH DAY (*Celia Tobin*)

As there is no Events Team, the parish looks for willing helpers to make the day a success and many helpers made the day most enjoyable.

It is the hard work, very hard work of Celia Tobin, helped by Christine Gosling, which contributes to the success of the Summer Fete. They worked tirelessly for many months co-ordinating the stalls and various helpers. A big thank you to them for bringing such enjoyment to all who come.

Events can be organised by members of the parish, especially events for charities. The Parish Office needs to be consulted and dates scrutinised.

Nan Jacobson
Social Forum

Youth

CONFIRMATION

68 candidates across the Pastoral Area were confirmed by Bishop Peter at two Masses held at St Joseph's on Sunday 23rd June 2019. The music was provided by a Pastoral Area Choir. A post confirmation Shared Supper evening for both candidates and parents was held on 28th June and the Confirmation Certificates were presented by Father Michael.

The course followed the YouCat Confirmation programme. It was well structured and provided a variety of opportunities for the candidates to explore and question their faith and to understand the gift of confirmation. The key highlights were the "Ice Breaker Opening Session" by Neil Roseman from NYMO, a Confirmandi and Parents session on the "The Holy Spirit the Person" by Charles and Sue Whitehead, a Reconciliation Service, Blaze Retreat, a Taize evening and a Teaching Mass at St Aidan's. Parents were kept aware of the programme content with regular communication. The course was supported by a group of Catechists from across the Pastoral Area and wonderful parent helpers who supported as small group facilitators, with refreshments, registration and the various service opportunities.

The Confirmandi have been involved in many service opportunities around the parish such as supporting St Joseph's School Christmas Bazaar; the Children's Liturgy Group Advent and Easter workshops; preparing parish mailings; church cleaning, and the youth section at Parish Day. Overall, the Confirmandi took part in over 300 hours of community service.

Blaze Retreat - Bishop Peter and NYMO invited Confirmation candidates to come to a day in celebration of, and preparation for, Confirmation. It complemented our programme and was great for Confirmandi to have a sense of belonging to the wider church by giving them the chance to mix with other young Catholics journeying towards Confirmation. It also gave a chance for Confirmandi to meet Bishop Peter before the big day and put questions to him. The day included Mass.

YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group for Year 7 and above has successfully continued over the year. It follows a simple format on a Sunday evening - fun and games followed by supper. The parents have given great support by being the "extra adult" and providing the light supper. The attendees of Youth Group were asked to share their thoughts of Youth Group - *'it provides a sense of community, being part of the parish, belonging, friends, fun, sharing food and drink - but needs to grow'*.

To help grow Youth Group our aim is to engage with parents from the Children's Liturgy Group to encourage more parents and young people to attend.

ALTAR SERVERS

During the past year we have had three new altar servers joined the team, five servers received their bronze medals for continued service and experience for over two years and five servers received their crosses for completing their first year of service. We currently have 22 regular servers.

We are blessed to have these young people serve in our parish and thank the parents for their support. We welcome new servers from the January after they have made their First Communion. Please get in touch via the Parish Office.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

St Joseph's School continues to grow spiritually with school Masses, school and class assemblies and retreat days.

The children are encouraged to support charities especially our local London Run when they donate food gathered from their Harvest Festival. The school played a valuable role in the Summer Fete (Parish Day).

A Carol Service is being organised at Christmas and a most touching Easter Cantata is planned for Easter. The priests, head teacher, deputy head and staff are responsible for the spiritual ethos of the school.

43 children from the school made their First Holy communion in June.

ST JOSEPH'S PARISH FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

The sacrament of First Communion is an important tradition for Catholic families and individuals. For Year 3 children and older attending non Catholic schools our First Holy Communion programme takes place on Sunday during the 9am Mass. The children are invited for a blessing by the Priest before leaving to learn about Jesus through Bible stories.

Their Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession is usually made during the Lenten season a few weeks before they receive Jesus for the first time. Each part of the Eucharist is explained to help to lay the foundations of the children's Christian life. Children are indeed capable of understanding that Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, and there is also the grace of the Holy Spirit who helps the children to understand according to their own level. We share the Gospel each week and find out about the meaning of the Word, where in the Bible these readings are found and how the teaching can be used in their everyday lives.

This year 22 children made their First Holy Communion in May celebrating with their families, friends and church community.

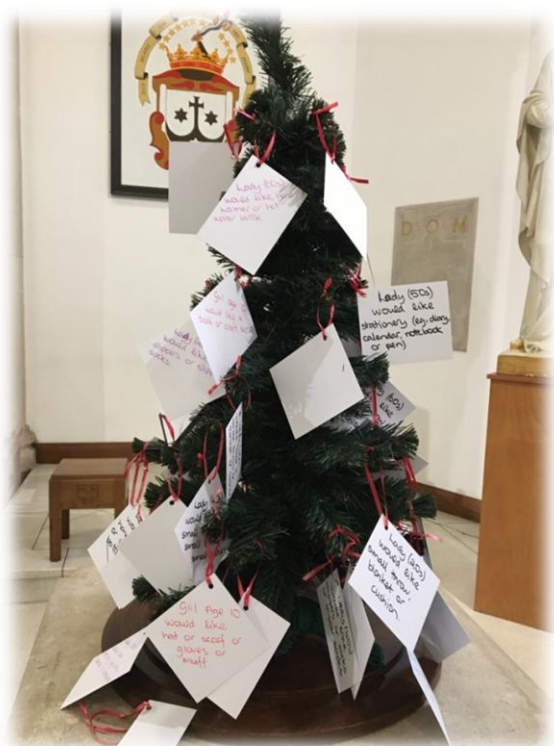
CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Children's Liturgy takes place during term times at the 9am Mass and all children and young people are invited to come out after the opening hymn until the end of the Intercessory Prayers. Children are invited to gather in five different age groups away from the congregation. Here they will share the Gospel, after which the reading is explained to them at a level appropriate to their age. After the reading, they will have the opportunity to ask questions and explore the Word at a deeper level. The younger groups will take part in a mix of activities - colouring, puzzles, songs etc to bring the story to life, whilst the older groups are helped to think about the real meaning of the reading and how they can relate it to their lives. When the discussions and activities are finished, the children return to resume the Liturgy with the rest of the congregation, with the Years 3/4 helping take up the Offertory and the younger groups gathering on the altar to show what they have been doing.

Children's Liturgy is open to all, with groups split as follows:

- Pre-school and Reception - First Committee Room
- School Years 1 and 2 - Library
- Years 3 and 4 - Left hand side sofa room
- Years 5 and 6 - Right hand side sofa room
- Years 7 upwards - Youth Office

We have a Children's Mass every term organised by Nan Jacobson where the children stay in church throughout the Mass and get involved in the readings, bidding prayers and songs, for example the Feast of Christ the King.



We have several events throughout the year for the children.

- Two arts and crafts workshops, one held on the first week of Advent and an Easter Workshop held in the holidays.
- Two family events - Welcome Back to School in September and Pentecost Sunday in May



They are designed to celebrate special times of the year with games/crafts for the children and refreshments to encourage families to share some time together getting to know others in the parish.

Childrens Liturgy re-introduced the Advent Giving Tree encouraging people to take a tag and buy the gift requested. These gifts were then given out to those in need in the parish. It was an overwhelming success with the generosity of the children and parents much appreciated.

We have a really friendly team of about 20 people involved in leading and supporting the weekly sessions. We have two social events during the year (Mass followed by a shared supper) and are always keen to have new people join us.

We have some new ideas for group activities this year - watch the newsletter for more details.

We feel like one big family both young and old supporting and encouraging each other - please do come and join us after 9am Mass for coffee and biscuits and to make new friends.

Kathy Slattery
Youth Forum

Mass Representatives

For many parishioners the Mass Representative may be the only personal point of contact with St Joseph's apart from the priest. Making parishioners and visitors feel welcomed to the Mass and being aware of what is going on generally within the parish are key to the success of this role. The main duties are as follows:

- To be available to Mass attendees before and after Mass
- To greet the people arriving and distribute Hymn Books, Newsletters, etc
- To identify and give a special welcome to new congregation members including providing information about the parish
- To be responsible for undertaking reading out notices and making Announcements as required
- To act as a conduit between Mass attendees and the clergy
- To be aware of what is happening in the parish and share information with Mass attendees



We are fortunate that our current Mass Representatives have been parishioners and members of the congregation at St Josephs for a number of years and have great experience and knowledge as well as possessing the

necessary attributes that are required of a Mass Representative. Our current representatives are:

Chalfont St Peter, Saturday 5:30pm Vigil Mass
Chalfont St Peter, Sunday 7:45am Mass
Chalfont St Peter, Sunday 9am Mass
Chalfont St Peter, Sunday 11am Mass
Chalfont St Peter, Sunday 5:30pm Mass
Denham, Sunday 9:30am Mass
Iver Heath, Saturday 4:30pm/Sunday 9am Mass

Doreen Pooley
Des Francis
Mary Jones
Chris Gaskill
Mary Forsyth
Phyllis Smith
Ann Saunders

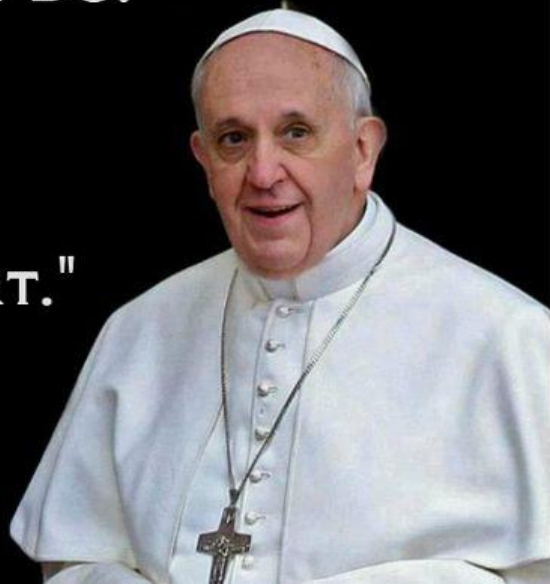
If you have 15 minutes or so every couple of weeks and could help out with “welcoming” then please see your Mass Representative and volunteer your services. Your help will be much appreciated.

Doreen Pooley
Mass Representatives

**"HELP ONE ANOTHER
THIS IS WHAT JESUS TEACHES US.
THIS IS WHAT I DO.**

**AND I DO IT
WITH MY HEART."**

- POPE FRANCIS



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Diocese of Northampton
Registered Charity Number 234091

Parish Office
Open from 9:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday
(closed for lunch between 1pm-2pm)