

Autumn 2008



# The Chester Catholic

## Clergy Changes in Chester Pastoral Area

Two of the parishes in our Local Pastoral Area are served by clergy who are appointed from outside Shrewsbury Diocese: St. Francis's, served by the Franciscan Friars, and St. Clare's, currently served by the Parish Priest of St. Anthony's Saltney who is appointed by the Bishop of Wrexham. In October, clergy moves were announced affecting these parishes ...

### Changes at St Francis's

Fr Gordon OFM Cap who has been Parish Priest for three years is to become Parish Priest at Erith Friary, Kent, from 1 January 2009. He will be replaced by Fr



Fr Andrzej (Andrew) & Fr Gordon

Andrzej who has worked in the parish for a year. Both became Capuchins in the mid 1970s. Fr Gordon was parish priest at Peckham and Pantasaph for several years. During his office, social life has been invigorated by a series of well-attended themed evenings (complemented most recently by a trip to *The Barber of Seville* in Liverpool), a large charismatic

prayer group was established, and much care was lavished on the church interior, wonderful floral decorations, and imaginative liturgical events. He says that he is sorry to leave for he was just getting used to Chester and city life. Erith will benefit by his formidable energy. We wish him well.

Fr Andrzej (Andrew) is a Pole who was guardian of the Capuchin house in Seville and, from 1982-2005, a student and teacher of patristics in Rome's Antonianum and Teresianum. A gifted linguist, he has already offered to set up a course in Italian within the friary for anyone in the parish. His infectious sense of humour should make lessons enjoyable.

*Bernard Beatty*

### Changes at St Clare's

The priest-sharing parishes of St. Clare's (Shrewsbury Diocese) and St. Anthony's (Wrexham Diocese) wished a very fond farewell to Fr. Francis Doyle at a joint party on All Soul's evening at Oddfellows Hall, Saltney. Fr Francis had been resident at St. Anthony's for 7 years (7-year itch?) and served at St. Clare's as well for the last 3, and he now moves on to Buckley. The hall was jam-packed



Farewell gifts for Fr Doyle

with well-wishers, after presentations and speeches Fr. Francis said 'Grace' and everyone partook of a marvellous feast prepared by all Parishoners. The two parishes welcomed Fr Simon Treloar to his first Masses on 18th October. Fr. Simon is of Cornish ancestry. He studied at Oscott Seminary and was ordained on 11th June 2005. He has spent three years at Wrexham Cathedral and after a short 6-month stay at Abergele is hoping to settle into the presbytery at St. Anthony's for a longer sojourn.



Fr Simon

*Jenny Szczyglowska*

## Exciting times for Catholic High School, Chester

Following several years of planning and one year of building, the Catholic High School's innovative and inspiring Emmaus Building is complete. This project has delivered impressive new teaching and learning spaces for music and drama departments and the entire 6th Form, together with a new Visitor Reception Area and two new laboratories.

John Murray, Headteacher said "The new Emmaus Building is fantastic and provides a first class learning environ-

ment for pupils now and in the future that will help ensure that all pupils reach their full potential."

Stephen Gauller, the School's Strategic Business Manager, added "We're committed to creating inspiring and stimulating environments for children to learn in. This meant taking all aspects of new buildings into account in the design process, including its environmental credentials. Energy saving features include solar panels and rain water collec-

tion system that recycles rain water, reducing the water loads required by the school."

Peter Bulmer, recently-elected Chairman of Governors, said "The new facilities are a huge hit with pupils and staff alike. They will transform the learning experience for our children. The enthusiasm for the new environments is wonderful to see and will undoubtedly make a real difference to the pupils' achievements."

*Pictures of the Emmaus Building auditorium overleaf*

## Lourdes Anniversary celebrations

Early this year we booked a September visit to Lourdes and were very surprised when the travel agent couldn't get us into our usual hotel. The reason later became apparent when we heard that the Pope was to visit Paris and Lourdes to strengthen ties with France and to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Apparitions to St. Bernadette in Lourdes.

It was anticipated that over a quarter of a million people would be in Lourdes. Fortunately the organisation for the visit worked very well, but unless you were prepared to sleep outside overnight or go several hours before a ceremony took place you could not see the Pope in close-up.

We attended the opening Mass held in a newly erected Altar on the meadow. We arrived two and a half hours before the Pope was due (3 hours before the Mass) and could only find a place to stand some hun-

dreds of yards from the Altar. However very large television screens had been erected and we could follow the Mass from them. Countless Priests came into the crowds to distribute Holy Communion. Similarly when we arrived an hour and a half to attend the International



Mass in the underground Basilica, which holds 27,000 people, we couldn't even find a place to stand!

Very notable was the high spirits of the pilgrims and the large number of young people.

Although we like to go to Lourdes at quieter times, we very much enjoyed this very special occasion. *Carol Galvin*

## Chester ACROSS Group

**ACROSS** is a recognised charity created specifically to provide the "pilgrimage of a lifetime", by Jumbulance, to Lourdes for those who are sick and disabled (VIPs). The Chester Across Group has been taking parties of sick and disabled to Lourdes since 1994. With a dedicated team of Nursing Staff and experienced carers, together with a Chaplain, the Chester group has provided a very significant alternative to getting to Lourdes especially for those who feel they are "too sick or disabled" to travel. The Jumbulance has 7 beds for sick/disabled who have higher dependency needs.

**The group will be travelling to Lourdes on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009 for 9 days including 7 nights in a top hotel which caters for sick/disabled pilgrims.**

The Group could not function without volunteer "helpers" who allow our VIPs to enjoy a truly memorable religious pilgrimage, but at the same time to do so in a holiday atmosphere which provides the best of both worlds for everyone. The perfect balance of this holiday with Our Lady is sure to bring lasting memories and spiritual fulfillment for everyone.

The group is now looking to recruit sick and disabled as well as male and female volunteer helpers, including nurses.

**For further information please contact Group Leader Tony Murphy, on 0788-1656-974 or email to [tonymurphyefc2002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tonymurphyefc2002@yahoo.co.uk)**

## Chester & Wirral Newman Circle

- ♦ The Newman Association is a national organisation whose members meet regularly in local "circles" to discuss and develop their understanding of the Christian faith. Most members are RC, but baptised Christians of other traditions are warmly welcome as Associate Members.
- ♦ A new Circle has recently been formed to serve the Chester & Wirral area. Monthly meetings have been arranged up until the end of 2009, and are usually held from 7.30pm to 9pm on a Saturday evening at 4 Hamilton Street, Chester, CH2 3 JG
- ♦ For more information contact Joseph O'Neill on 01244 322440 or email [jmoneill@btinternet.com](mailto:jmoneill@btinternet.com)
- ♦ Further information, including the local programme of speakers, also available at: [www.newman.org.uk](http://www.newman.org.uk)

## CAFOD campaign "Pure Gold?"

Cafod's "Pure Gold" exhibition went on national tour this year, to highlight the social and environmental problems faced by local communities in developing countries as a consequence of gold mining operations, particularly in areas of Honduras, the Philippines and the Democratic Re-

public of the Congo. In October, Sue Bownas, Cafod Manager for Shrewsbury Diocese arranged for the exhibition to come to Chester, choosing as the venue the brand-new Emmaus Building at the Catholic High School.



*CHS Head John Murray with young visitors from Belgrave School and St Clare's School*

public of the Congo. In October, Sue Bownas, Cafod Manager for Shrewsbury Diocese arranged for the exhibition to come to Chester, choosing as the venue the brand-new Emmaus Building at the Catholic High School.

- ♦ Our Diocese has a long-standing connection with DR Congo through Fr John Kirwan, a Mill Hill missionary priest based in the diocese of Basankusu (covering an area twice the size of Belgium in the NW part of the country). Thankfully, that part of the Congo is not affected by the rebel fighting, but Fr John writes powerfully of the social distress felt throughout the country. He also writes about the abusive exploitation of other natural resources, including the forests in their part of the country.
- ♦ Fr John has been in the UK this autumn, and visited St Columba's to celebrate Mass on 23rd November.
- ♦ See Fr John's recent newsletter on: [www.chestercatholic.org.uk](http://www.chestercatholic.org.uk)

## 'Best ever' results at Catholic High School

This summer was a spectacular time for CHS Chester. The GCSE results were the best ever, and the success was based on record levels of achievement in RE, English and the school's specialist subject, Science. Two GCSE students, **Rosie McMahon** and **Tim Murray**, were placed in the top ten highest achievers nationally for RE, out of over 67,000 entries. Both secured 100% marks on the way to their A\* grades.

Over 70% of the GCSE candidates secured 5 or more passes at Grade C or better. The 'new' measurement, which includes both English and Mathematics, is also clearly a record breaker for the school with 57% of students achieving this benchmark. In addition, 99% of all students achieved 5 passes at all grades including A\*-G.

The most notable GCSE performers were **Nick Green** and **Mitchell Paul** who passed all ten of their examinations with A\* grades. Three more students (**Josh Band**, **Rosie McMahon** and **Frances Dee**) had secured all A and A\* grades. **Henry Appleton**, **Tim Murray** and **Karl Southern** had all A\*s and As with one B grade. Each of these students also took ten GCSEs. Other spectacular

performances included **Andy Hill** who got 6A\*s, 3 As and 3Bs, **Hannah Shore** with 5 A\*s, 3 As and 2Bs, and **Frances Massie** 3A\*s, 6As and 3Bs.

Theology students passing the A level, and 23 of these securing either A or B grades. Around half of the Sixth Form regularly choose to take the Theology A level.

Three students achieved straight As - **Lucy Black**, now studying Chemistry at Bristol University, **Tom Waite**, Civil Engineering at Manchester University and **Stephanie Owen**, Music and Maths at Birmingham University. Four more students - **James Dee**, **Christopher Perry**, **Helen Morris** and **Canice O'Mahony**, secured two As and a B.

Headteacher John Murray, said "It is fantastic to see so many young adults moving on to the university of their choice. We have students who have done so very well at every level - from the straight As, to those who have really achieved by passing two A levels. They can all feel very proud of their achievements.

"This success is also a tribute to the hard work and energy of our teachers, and a result of the support the students have had from parents who have taken a real interest and been involved throughout."

To help compare different schools in the county, and to take into account the different intakes into each school, the government uses a 'value added' measurement. This takes account of the ability and background of students as well as their actual results. On this basis The Catholic High School was first in the county for A level and second at GCSE.



*Emmaus auditorium—6th Form at ease with the fold-out seating*

The school has an excellent reputation for its work with students with additional needs and each of these students secured at least 5 GCSE grades including English and Maths.

At A level too, the school has increased the proportion of students securing the top grades. The overall pass rate was 98%, with the proportion of A and B grades at just under 50%, and three quarters of all grades were at A-C. Once again the RE department excelled with all 39

## St Columba's parishioner completes pilgrim walk

This summer, Kevin Keegan from St Columba's parish walked the traditional pilgrim's route to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. Starting in the Pyrenees in mid-August, and passing through famous cities such as Pamplona, Burgos and León on the way, he reached Santiago—which tradition holds to be the burial site of the St James the Apostle—on 13 September.

Taking just one day off to re-charge his batteries in Burgos, he walked an average of 25 or 30km a day, usually starting before 7.00 am and finishing around 2.30 pm to avoid walking during the hottest part of the day.

A keen walker, Kevin felt reasonably well prepared for the rigours of the walk, but he warns others interested in the pilgrimage that some training is essential. He also advises future pilgrims not to try to carry too much. "If anyone from the Chester parishes is thinking about going,



*Footsore but smiling:  
Kevin arrives in Santiago*

they would be welcome to call me and I'll suggest what to take," he says. "You really need very little. At the time of year I went, it was enough to have one change of clothes, a fleece jumper and a good waterproof cape."

Kevin did the 800km walk on his own, but says one of the most pleasant aspects of it was meeting fellow pilgrims from many different parts of the world along the way. "For me, that was the real plus," he explains. "It was a great experience meeting people from North and South America, from Australia and many parts of Europe. So even though I was on my own, I had the companionship and friendship of people from all over the world. Everyone had their own reasons for doing the walk—some talked about their motives, others kept theirs private—but we all had a common goal, which seemed to inspire people to share and to help one another, and that was the lovely thing about it."

*Stephen Tierney*

## Chester & District LPA Team

### Regional Dean & Co-Leader of Pastoral

**Team:** Fr Russell Cooke, St Columba's,  
1 Newhall Rd, Plas Newton,  
Chester CH2 1SA, 01244 400873

**Lay Co-Leader:** Kate Hughes, 01244  
683538

**Newsletter Contact:** Bernard Payne, 01244  
350323 email: [bernard.payne@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:bernard.payne@tiscali.co.uk)

**Training Team Convenor:** Syd Jones,  
01244 345676

The LPA Team for Chester & District comprises a priest and one elected lay person from each of the six parishes, together with one Deacon (nominated by the Deacons from the area) and one Teacher and one Catechist (nominated by the Bishop). The current Team, serving for three years from October 2007 is :

- ◆ **St Clare:** Fr Francis Doyle (now Fr Simon Treloar), Kate Hughes
- ◆ **St Columba:** Fr Russell Cooke, Bernard Payne
- ◆ **St Cuthbert/ St Thomas Becket:** Fr Joe Carney, Bill Cresswell/ Tom Bonikowski
- ◆ **St Francis:** Bro Gordon Pesterfield (from Jan 2009 Fr Andrzej), Vincent Hatton/ Anne Brocklehurst
- ◆ **St Theresa:** Fr Jim Kenny, Gerald Jones
- ◆ **St Werburgh:** Fr Paul Shaw, Brian Burns
- ◆ **Deacon:** Rev Lawrence Hordley
- ◆ **Catechist:** Tia Lasok-Smith
- ◆ **Teacher:** John Murray

## Parishes in Chester & District Local Pastoral Area

[www.chestercatholic.org.uk](http://www.chestercatholic.org.uk)

<i>Times of Sunday Masses</i>			<i>Parish Priest</i>	<i>Lay rep on LPA Team</i>
St. Anthony's, Saltney (Wrexham Diocese)		Sun 11.00am	Fr Simon Treloar	N/A
St. Clare's, Lache, Chester	Sat 6.00pm	Sun 9.30am	Served from St Anthony's	Kate Hughes
St. Columba's, Plas Newton, Chester	Sat 7.15pm	Sun 9.15 & 11.00am	Fr Russell Cooke	Bernard Payne
St. Cuthbert's, Mouldsworth		Sun 9.00am	Fr Joe Carney	Bill Cresswell/ Tom Bonikowski
St Francis, Chester	Sat 6.30pm	Sun 8.00, 9.30 & 11.00am	Fr Gordon Pesterfield	Vincent Hatton/ Anne Brocklehurst
St. Theresa's, Blacon, Chester	Sat 6.30pm	Sun 10.00am	Fr Jim Kenny	Gerald Jones
St Thomas Becket, Tarporley	Sat 5.30pm	Sun 11.00am	Fr Joe Carney	Bill Cresswell/ Tom Bonikowski
St Werburgh, Chester	Sat 6.00pm (at Rowton Methodist Chapel)	Sun 9.00, 10.45am, 6.00pm	Fr Paul Shaw	Brian Burns

## LPA Training Team

### Advent Holy Hours 2008

In this series of Advent Holy Hours each occasion will reflect the unique style and individuality of each church and may include prayer, reflection and Benediction.

- ◆ **Monday 1st December, 10.30am, Rowton Methodist Chapel (St Werburgh's)**
- ◆ **Thursday 4th December 7.30pm, St Theresa's Blacon**
- ◆ **Sunday 7th December 3.00pm, St Francis' Chester**
- ◆ **Tuesday 9th December 2.15pm, St Clare's Lache**
- ◆ **Thursday 11th December 10.30am, St Columba's Plas Newton**
- ◆ **Wednesday 17th December 7.30pm, St Thomas Becket Tarporley**
- ◆ **Sunday 21st December 4.30pm St Werburgh's Chester**

All ages welcome. If you can offer or require transport please contact your parish priest.

## Chester Hospitals Chaplaincy—an update

November 1st 2008 was the third anniversary of the introduction of an RC chaplaincy model at the Countess and Bowmere hospitals operating without a "resident" priest chaplain, making it a good time to thank everyone for their help:-

- ◆ The priests of the Chester & Ellesmere Port Local Pastoral Areas: Rev. Frs. Atkinson, Cooke, Doyle, Kenny, Mullaley and Shaw (and Fr Sharrocks before him), and Franciscan Frs. Pesterfield, Windsor and Marsh. All have provided faithful 24/7 emergency cover, in addition to taking a turn to celebrate the monthly Mass at the Countess.
- ◆ The 23 Catholic ministers of Holy Communion/volunteers from our

(mainly) Chester and Ellesmere Port parishes, who administer bedside Communions to RC patients and give general help to myself as RC chaplain. Their work is a vital part of chaplaincy at the hospitals.

We're part of the wider "multi faith" chaplaincy provision at the hospitals, co-ordinated by Rev. John Kingsley (full time Free Church chaplain), assisted by Rev. George Hodgkinson (part time C of E chaplain), Rev. Nigel Mountford (part time Free Church chaplain at the Bowmere hospital) and myself, supported by local clergy from various denominations. In addition there, are nine Lay Visitors who help to make weekly contact with every patient, and 20 Chapel Escorts for patients who are able to attend the Sunday services. Services are ably assisted by our organist Cliff Jones.

Bishop Brian attaches great importance to the "ecumenical dimension" of the chaplaincy,

and it is good to be able to report increasing success in this. The common cause of providing spiritual care for all patients, their families and friends and the hospital staff is a uniting influence for all chaplaincy workers.

If you are concerned that anyone in hospital may be in need of help from the team, please telephone (01244) 364543, an answer 'phone is available. From inside the hospitals, calls for emergency visits by our priests are made, with the help of staff, via the hospital switchboard. From outside the hospital, the priest on call for emergencies can be contacted by telephoning (01244) 36500 and asking to page the on-call RC chaplain.

**Please keep the team and its work in your prayers.**

*Lawrence Hordley*