

Summer 2010



The Chester Catholic

John McCann— a different brand of school leaver!

St Clare's parishioner John McCann retires as Deputy Head of Chester Catholic High School at the end of this term, after no fewer than 35 years service at the school.

Originally from Consett, County Durham, Mr McCann has worked at the school since 1975 having previously taught in Liverpool, and at an Ursuline school in Athens. He taught a range of subjects and became Head of Special Needs until 1989 when he took up the post of Deputy Head.

The main changes he has witnessed in his time at the school centre on the curriculum—and how it is delivered. Some changes have been for the better, others less so, and he observes that in some areas things have now



John McCann—must sign in as a visitor from now on?

come full circle. He has also seen significant changes to the staff and structure of the school.

“Among the physical changes, the new front of the school is amazing, and it's brilliant to see the Emmaus building for the Sixth Form, Music and Drama departments completed. The school has always been very popular and there was a real need for this extra space.”

A keen traveller, he has a family holiday in Portugal arranged for the first part of the summer and will also go on a Nile cruise in September at the time of the start of the new school year. Beyond this, he is still allowing plans to take shape. It's clear he will greatly miss the life of the school.

One of the ways in which he plans to remain in touch is through the contacts the school

has with St Clare's and all the parishes in and around Chester, which he hopes will increase. “There is a wealth of enthusiasm in school,” he says. “We know many students are members of the St Vincent de Paul Society, we have a Lourdes group, some are Readers and others Eucharist ministers, and there are lots of musicians. It's a question of making these skills and talents transferable to the parish and the wider community. If the few know they have a role in their parishes, it would be interesting to see if we can convince the many to become more involved.”

There is much to build on. He describes the numbers preparing for confirmation in the Chester parishes as “just wonderful”, and is delighted by the reception the school's famous Swing Band receives when it plays at parish social events in and around the city, usually raising funds for the many charities the school supports. “The link is real,” he concludes, “and I hope we keep finding ways of celebrating it and promoting it.”

Fr Jim Kenny, back from Rome

Fr Jim Kenny has recently returned to St Theresa's after 2 months sabbatical. How did he get on—and how did the parish cope in his absence?

Fr Jim planned his sabbatical programme in discussion with Bishop Brian, and with Canon John Rafferty who has diocesan responsibility for priestly ongoing formation. It was agreed that the Bishop's office would help with the necessary arrangements for Mass cover at St Theresa's, and that he would take the leave after the busy period of Easter and be back in time for the First Holy Communion in late June.

Fr Jim's first month was based at All Hallows College in Dublin, taking part in their Renewal for Ministry programme. Attracting clergy and lay people from many parts of the world it provided inspirational company.

The second month was based at the Irish College in Rome from where Fr Jim, as well as re-discovering the sights and splendours of Rome, paid visits to Assisi and Florence. The later part of Fr Jim's stay coincided with the closing stages of the Year

of Priests, including the Mass of Celebration in St Peter's Square on 11th June, attended by no fewer than 15,000 priests. Though the visit wasn't planned this way, early June also coincided with the 30th anniversary of Fr Jim's ordination. All in all, it's clear that Fr Jim returns from his sabbatical refreshed and re-invigorated.

So how did things go in the parish? A parishioner comments:

“Two questions there, how did we cope with the spiritual side of our life, and how did we cope with the day-to-day running of the parish? Our spiritual wellbeing was catered for by a variety of priests, including Bishop Brian, who stood in for Fr. Jim. Our Deacon Charles was a tower of strength during this period, always ready with advice and practical solutions to any problems that cropped up. It was interesting to observe the diversity in the styles of the different priests who celebrated Mass, especially the delivery of their homilies.

“The practical side of running the parish was made easier by the existence of our Pastoral Team and the willingness of the parishioners to help when needed. We were lucky in that there



Fr Jim and a sea of priests at St Peter's

were no occurrences that could not be handled by either Deacon Charles or one of the team.

“In retrospect I think that the answer to the question is: we coped quite well—but only with the kind of help that can never be taken for granted.”

Fr Jim, for his part, is very appreciative of the help given by Bishop Brian, Deacon Charles and the Pastoral Team at St Theresa's. He's also very grateful to the LPA clergy for their taking on extra on-call duties at the hospital while he was away.

News from around the parishes ...

Confirmation: joint programme for St Columba's and St Theresa's

Over 40 young parishioners from St. Columba's and St. Theresa's parishes are about to begin preparing together to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. This follows the very successful formation of a joint St Theresa's and St Columba's Confirmation team in 2008, when the young people from both parishes got on very well together, had fun, prepared well for Confirmation and formed a good group.

In the year following, many of the young people took part in the "Bishop's Challenge" - a challenge given by Bishop Brian do something for their com-

munity. Activities included collecting for the SVP, helping at the SVP Christmas Party, playing in the Music Group, altar serving, leading the Lenten "Footsteps to the Cross" service, decorating the church Christmas tree and many other activities, ending with a sponsored walk to raise money for CAFOD.

The next Sacrament of Confirmation for St Columba's and St Theresa's parishes will be held on 30th November 2010. Young people from either parish, wishing to be Confirmed, should put their name on the list in either church porch. They will then receive details of the Preparation Programme which begins in September.



Just some of the 2008 Confirmation candidates

Easter tableau at St Thomas Becket's

For Joe Carney, Parish Priest of St Thomas Becket, Tarporley decorated the altar to celebrate the Easter story. The Three Crosses are self explanatory. Not so easily seen are the 30 Silver Pieces reminding us of Judas' price to betray Jesus. The Cockerel represents Peter's denial.



The hammer and five nails near the crosses remind us of the Crucifixion of Jesus. In front are three spears representing the Soldiers and the Centurion. The Hyssop sticks and the jars remind us that He was given vinegar to drink.

The Passion of Jesus is represented by the Crown of Thorns. The Shroud hanging on the Cross tells us that after his death, Jesus was taken down from the cross and was buried. The last symbol to be found is the noose on the left hand side, this represents Judas' despair and suicide. Tarporley church is small but all will agree that the visual images were powerful and helped concentrate the mind on the true message of Easter.

Jubilee at St Clare's

The parish of St Clare marks its Golden Jubilee in December this year, and the Bishop will be coming to St Clare's to celebrate Mass on Wednesday 8th December.

Prior to that, the parish celebrates the Patronal Feast of St Clare with a special Mass on Sunday 8th August. A number of further activities and events are being planned, including the making of a commemorative banner, a talk on the history of St Clare, a concert and a parish dinner.



St Werburgh's parish outing



On Wednesday 30th June parishioners from St Werburgh's, St Clare's and other parishes spent a wonderful day in Shrewsbury - Mass at the Cathedral, walking tour of the town and then visit to Shrewsbury School hosted by two pupils,

Ed and Alistair

Upton Parish Councillors visit St Columba's

St Columba's parish is an active member of Churches Together in Upton, and helps with their scheme for delivery of Easter and Christmas cards to local residents, setting out details of services in all the local churches. Over the last couple of years, links with Upton Parish Council have been strengthened, both informally through such events as Quiz Nights, and more formally through the Parish Council being invited each year to participate in a service at one of the Upton churches. This year, Parish Councillors were invited to attend the 11.00am Mass at St Columba's on 27th June. The 1st and 2nd Readings at the Mass were read by the Parish Council Chair, Cllr Jean Evans.



Fr Cooke with Upton Parish Councillors John Butler, Jean Evans, Pat Lott and David Savage

Civic Trust Heritage Open Days "go modern"

Chester Civic Trust celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year and marks the occasion by including notable examples of 1960s architecture in its annual programme of Heritage Open Days. So this year St Columba's has been invited to join the programme, and will be open to the public from 2-4pm on Saturday and Sunday 11th and 12th September.

St Werburgh's has long taken part in the Open Days programme and will open up again this year, from 9th to 12th September.

Organ Recitals at St. Werburgh's Chester

"TUESDAYS-at-ONE"

Lunchtime recitals given by members of the Chester & North-East Wales Organists' & Choirmasters' Association and Friends. Every Tuesday through to 14th September. Retiring collection.

"CELEBRITY RECITAL"

7.30pm Admission £5.00

Tuesday 21 September
PAUL DERRETT
Hull Based Concert Organist

CAFOD connects...

On a glorious sunny Saturday in late June, CAFOD Diocesan Manager Sue Bowmas brought together volunteers and supporters from around the Diocese to the Emmaus building at Chester Catholic High School for a lively exchange of news and ideas, including the



latest from CAFOD head office on their various campaigns.

Look out for further information on:

- ◆ **“Connect2”** - a new scheme in which parishes are invited to link more directly with a local community in one of a number of developing countries, getting to know more about that community’s hopes and dreams, their struggles and challenges.
- ◆ **“Act on Poverty”** - a postcard campaign to urge the Prime Minister to act on global poverty, including pressing for a fair deal on climate change, honouring commitments on levels of aid, and ensuring businesses are accountable to those communities affected by their operations. This is allied to a parliamentary lobby taking place on 20th October.
- ◆ **“Giving for FREE”** - freepost envelope systems for recycling your old mobile phones and used inkjet cartridges, the recycling firm paying money to CAFOD.
- ◆ **“Shrewsbury’s CAFOD Mile”** - putting fun into fund raising with sponsored walks or runs over the distance of one mile, at locations all over the diocese, set for 9th July 2011.

Contact Sue Bowmas, 01244 677594

End-of-Year notes from High School Chaplain

Kintbury Retreat :

Last month, a party of 27 Year 12 students attended a four day retreat at St Cassian’s Centre in Kintbury, near Newbury. It was an extraordinary experience. The Centre was founded in the 1970’s by the great De La Salle brother Damian Lundy who wanted to provide a deeply spiritual experience for young people which met their specific spiritual needs and interests in a rapidly changing world.

The programme delivered by the residential team there has changed little in all those years.

It was the first time our school had attended Kintbury so it was personally satisfying for me to return there after a 13 year absence and witness the startling effect the experience had on our students. “Life-changing” and “the best four days of my life” were just two comments made. The conduct of our students was exemplary, their participation and enthusiasm infectious. They made a huge impression on the team there and several are planning to return in



CHS Year 12 at St Cassian’s

the summer for a special week long retreat.

Charity work:

A new approach to the students’ charity work was taken this academic year. In the Upper School, students opted to join Youth SVP groups in Years 10 and 12, undertaking work in the local community with the elderly, special needs students and children in a local primary school. Their commitment has been evident in the work itself and in their planning meetings which always start with prayer. Some twenty students in Year 10 recently received certificates of achievement at a special ceremony in school while some twenty four 6th Formers will receive theirs in September.

Students in Years 7, 8, and 9 adopted a charity, choosing respectively Meningitis Trust, Claire House and Lepra in Action. The highlight of their fundraising efforts was a show recently at the school given by the local ladies’ choir “A Handbag of Harmonies” attended by their parents, which raised over £1000—terrific entertainment as well! Representatives of the three charities will be presented with a cheque by the students in special assemblies in the last week of term.

Paul Lever, CHS Chaplain

Sing Up!

St Werburgh’s and St. Columba’s school community has worked hard this year to promote singing and music. The school was awarded a “Sing Up” Gold Award in March. Along with six other schools in the country, it was nominated as “an excellent singing school” by “Sing Up”, the UK’s largest children’s music charity. The school recently took part in Sing Up’s nationwide project “School Trip Singalong” singing from an open top bus around Chester Zoo, and in the “Big Sing” event in Chester city centre.

The school has now been nominated to become a “Platinum” school, sharing and



working with other schools in the community to promote singing. Music Coordinator Rachel Borman has set up a Catholic Schools singing cluster with St Theresa’s, St Clare’s, and St Bernard’s in Ellesmere Port. Children from each school will work together to perform in workshops/ concerts and share good practice to aid each other in achieving the Sing Up awards.

No matter the ability, nationality and background, the school has found that singing is inclusive to all and allows everyone to take part. It allows the children to be creative, fosters individuality, confidence and improves social skills. It has brought together the whole school community and helped foster better links with other Catholic primary schools.

St Peter’s Centre

Previous issues of *The Chester Catholic* have referred to St Peter’s Ecumenical Centre, at The Cross, right in the centre of Chester. It is run by volunteers from the main Christian denominations and opens Mondays to Saturdays to offer teas, coffees and refreshments—and a haven of tranquillity!

The Centre seeks further volunteers to help in the kitchen, serving fairtrade teas and coffees and Dial House cakes to the public. It is satisfying work in a friendly team of people. Session are for 3 hours am or pm, Weekdays or Saturdays.

For further information please contact Heather at the Centre on 01244 313920.

Hospital Chaplaincy arrangements

Previous issues of *The Chester Catholic* have given updates on Chaplaincy arrangements at the Countess of Chester and Bowmere Hospitals. The Chaplaincy Service has produced a detailed pamphlet setting out the chaplaincy provision for Roman Catholics.

Copies of the pamphlet are now available in all the parishes.

**Chester & District Local Pastoral Area (LPA 11) comprises the RC parishes of St Clare (Lache)
St Columba (Plas Newton), St Cuthbert (Mouldsworth), St Francis (City Centre), St Theresa (Blacon)
St Thomas Becket (Tarpорley) and St Werburgh (City Centre)**

The LPA Team meets four times a year. Co– Chairs are Fr Russell Cooke (01244 400873) & Kate Hughes (01244 683538).

LPA Team Secretary is Syd Jones (01244 345676, daytime).

Contact for “The Chester Catholic” newsletter is Bernard Payne (01244 350323).

Website www.chestercatholic.org.uk

<i>Times of Sunday Masses</i>			<i>Parish Priest</i>	<i>Lay rep on LPA Team</i>
St. Clare’s, Lache, Chester	Sat 6.00pm	Sun 9.30am	Fr Paul Shaw	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 9.15 & 11.15am Polish Mass 4.30pm	Bro Prins Casinader OFM Cap	Vincent Hatton/ Anne Brocklehurst
St. Theresa’s, Blacon, Chester	Sat 6.30pm	Sun 10.00am	Fr Jim Kenny	Gerald Jones
St Thomas Becket, Tarpорley	Sat 5.30pm	Sun 11.00am	Fr Joe Carney	Bill Cresswell/ Tom Bonikowski
St Werburgh’s, Chester	Sat 6.00pm (Rowton Methodist Chapel)	Sun 9.00, 10.45am, 6.00pm	Fr Paul Shaw	Brian Burns

News in brief from the LPA Team:

Some LPA diary dates:

- Local Pastoral Areas were set up across the Diocese in Autumn 2007. The 3-year term of office for the lay representatives on the LPA Team therefore ends this Autumn. Within our LPA, Chester & District, each parish will be making its own arrangements for electing a new representative or renewing the appointment of the current representative. We expect that the new Team will be a mixture of new and familiar faces, ready for the Team meeting on 10 November.
- The recent changes at St Clare’s (served from St Werburgh’s) and the need for cover for Fr Kenny’s sabbatical leave from St Theresa’s have served to highlight the issue of provision of Masses, and their times and numbers across the LPA. The question of rationalisation has already been considered by the LPA Team, but is to be looked at again in more detail. Any proposed changes will be discussed with parishioners.
- Wednesday 8 September, LPA Team meeting, 7pm at Chester Catholic High School.
- Thursday 9 to Sunday 12 September, Chester Civic Trust Heritage Open Days, including St Werburgh’s and St Columba’s churches (St Columba’s open on the Saturday and Sunday). See item on page 2.
- Saturday 18 September, Day of Recollection for Eucharistic Ministers, 10am to 3pm at St Columba’s. Led by Canon Chris Walsh.
- Saturday 2 October, Day of Reflection and Guidance for Readers, 10am to 3pm at St Columba’s. Led by Marian Tolley.
- Wednesday 10 November, LPA Team meeting, 7pm at Chester Catholic High School.
- Tuesday 30 November, 7pm: Confirmation Mass at St Columba’s for candidates from St Columba’s and St Theresa’s parishes. See item on page 2.
- Wednesday 8 December, Golden Anniversary Mass, St Clares

St Columba parishioner serves as Chester’s Lord Mayor

Cllr John Ebo, parishioner of St Columba’s, had the honour of being the first Lord Mayor under the auspices of the new authority of Cheshire West and Chester, his one-year term of office finishing in May this year. On 11th April, St Columba’s church was the setting for a Civic Mass of Thanksgiving attended by the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and the City Sheriff, all in ceremonial robes.

Earlier in the year, the Lord Mayor had greeted members of the Chester Section of the Catholic Women’s League at the Mansion House in Abbey Square, the temporary office of the Lord Mayor while renovations were underway in the Town Hall. The CWL were treated to a fascinating talk on the Civic Regalia, all items of which are of considerable symbolic and historical interest.

Speaking about his year of office, Cllr Ebo said how much he had appreciated the opportunity of representing the city in such a wide range of occasions, formal and informal. He particularly enjoyed chairing the Council meetings and being involved in the work of running the city.



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