

**Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury**  
**Parish Pastoral Council Report for 2005 – 2006**

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### **Report of the Chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council for 2005 – 2006**

In order to produce the annual parish report, all items for inclusion have to be given to Brenda well before the date of the actual AGM. So, last year this introduction was written well before the election of Benedict XVI to the chair of Saint Peter. We must all have been so happy to see the vast crowds in Rome to witness the new Pope's inauguration and we are indeed blessed with a holy, caring and wonderfully incisive man as his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* shows.

The saddest occurrence during the past year has been the sudden death of Father Anthony Sabo, who stood in for Father Sylvester. His ready smile, prayerful Mass and thoughtful homilies endeared him to us all. I am sure the Good Lord welcomed him with open arms, and that even now Father Anthony is helping us from his excellent vantage point. Father Sylvester did come, but only for just a month. The extent of our affection for him was shown by the fund-raising activities around Christmas time which resulted in nearly £6000 being given for the school that he runs for orphans. Few realise the depth of poverty in most of Africa. We throw away tins that they take off the bottoms (as well as the top), open them out and use the tins for roofing. The greed of the developed world with the pernicious trade imbalance is surely a blight on us all and we must support *Cafod* and *Traidcraft* (in the Parish) and *Fairtrade* (in our supermarkets) whenever we can.

Frank Hadfield retired from running the Church shop and it is good to put on record our gratitude to him for his years of devoted service with the wish that he enjoys his new time of rest and relaxation.

The Finance Committees calculations reveal that we need £1500 per week to stay financially healthy. We are about 10% short of this on average and therefore if we up our weekly contributions by 10% all will be well. But *Gift Aid* (by which taxpayers can give) insures another 30% rebate from the Inland Revenue and would solve our fiscal shortfall at a stroke. Please therefore do think about becoming a *Gift Aid* donor.

Finally something to look forward to. Over the weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> July, Bishop John Hine is making an official visit to the Parish. He will say two Masses, preach at each Mass, hear Confessions and meet the Parish Pastoral Council Members at 7.15pm, after the Sunday 6.00pm Mass. We extend a warm welcome to

Bishop John and hope the outcome of his visit is an increase in grace for us all.

**Chris Bull – Chairman PPC**

### **PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT**

Much of what I need to say has already been said by Chris Bull in his report! Undaunted, I shall try my best to fill in the gaps. Just because I don't mention the death of Father Anthony Sabo, the magnificent sum the parish raised for Father Sylvester's orphanage in Nigeria, and Frank Hadfield's retirement from St Thomas' Shop, does not mean, of course, that I don't rate these things very highly. I most certainly do!

Now for the gaps.

Well, firstly, I need to mention the welcoming of Christian Lumsden to the parish and the seamless way he has taken over from Anne Moynihan as Director of Music. We are very fortunate in Canterbury in having such a pool of talent we can dip into. All the parish organisations and groups are flourishing, sometimes under 'new management'. For example, in thanking Mark Bateson for his Presidency of the S.V.P., I must welcome Margaret Holman who has taken over the reigns. The U.C.M. continues to have a full programme, and the various music ministries and catechetical groups are thriving – witness their Reports in this booklet!

Chris Bull mentioned the Shop. I need to say a few words about its future. You'll notice it has been re-decorated and a new carpet and counter have been put in. Thankfully, I have now found a Manager for the shop. With his small team of Helpers our Shop should be open in the near future. One innovation, which I am very keen on, is to have the Shop open at weekends. So, thank you, Frank, for your help and support over the years, and welcome to the new Manager. Also, I must thank Frank's team of Helpers, some of whom, I know, will wish to continue "under new management".

At long last – and it's taken some years to get there – I can say we've done all that we can do within reason to bring an old church building, the Upper Room and the Hall into line with the provisions of the *Disabled Persons Act* and the *Child and Vulnerable Persons Act*. For instance, our new Reconciliation Room is now Child/Vulnerable Person and Disabled Person friendly. A chair-lift now provides access to the Upper Room for the frail or disabled, as does the new toilet facility for the disabled off the Upper Room. In addition, the old Reconciliation Room has become our new Quiet Room for those parents with less-than-quiet young children! Laurels should never be rested on, and I am already casting my weary

eye at the church fabric. Paint appears to be coming off the wall in some parts of the church, and the exterior stonework – or small chunks of it at any rate – regularly obey the Newtonian Laws of Gravity. With an old church (1875) and an even older Presbytery (1790), there's a lot still to be done. My gratitude goes to all those generous parishioners who continue to give sacrificially to the parish. At the risk of repetition, please heed what Chris Bull said about *Gift Aiding* what you give week by week to the Church.

As I'm vaguely in a financial mode, I need to thank Ron Arcari, our Parish *Gift Aid* organiser (he does much more than running our *Gift Aid* scheme, by the way) and the Parish Finance Advisory Committee for their wonderful support. As always, and with great sincerity, I must thank Brenda, our Parish Secretary, Wendy, our Priests' Housekeeper, and John our Site Manager (Caretaker to you and me) for all the cheerful and loyal support they give day after day and week after week.

Briefly, looking ahead, I do hope that the series of Talks to be given by Father Tom Herbst O.F.M. every Tuesday for ten weeks starting on 26<sup>th</sup> September will attract the same magnificent support his five Lenten Talks had. Father Tom has a wonderfully light way of presenting sometimes difficult topics, and I know that when he speaks on St John's Gospel later on this year we shall all come away refreshed and enthused.

I heard recently that Father Sylvester Onmoke will be with us for about six weeks from the first week in June. He also said that he's found another priest, Father William Abba who teaches at St Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Makurdi, Nigeria, to take his place for a month or so when he (Father Sylvester) leaves us in mid-July.

Finally, and most importantly, I count myself very blessed in having such a totally loyal and totally committed team of colleagues here in Canterbury: Fathers Philip, Richard and George and Deacon David (and not forgetting, of course, Con Boyle, our Seminarian). And, it goes without saying, the people of the parish.

*Canon Michael Bunce  
Parish Priest*

### **CANTERBURY PRISON**

The prison, alas, continues to thrive. It's that rare ministry in the Church where the fond hope is that it will no longer be needed! At the moment the prison houses just over 300 men, all of whom are coming towards the end of their sentence and all of whom (in theory at least) have an address in Kent or Medway. The

main emphasis is on training and rehabilitation, but this isn't always easy in what is, after all, the oldest prison building in the entire country (1808). The powers-that-be have decided to 're-rôle' – in other words to take a different kind of prisoner. It seems that the re-rôle will happen in September 2006 when only Foreign Nationals who have committed a criminal offence in this country and who are awaiting deportation at the end of their sentence will be admitted. There should be quite a 'take-up'. British prisoners (or at least some of them who fall into a certain category) can be given the 'tag' (or home curfew) some time before the expiry of their sentence. This 'curfew' will be extended to some Foreign Nationals; instead of being tagged, they will be given the opportunity to have their custodial sentence shortened by being deported as if they were being tagged. Obviously, the whole question of deportation will need to be carefully monitored. After all, care must be taken that no Foreign National is deported to a rogue state where all sorts of terrible things can happen to that individual. HMP Canterbury has been chosen to pilot this new scheme, so there's a lot of work attending planning meetings. The prison promises to be an exciting time in the next few months – as if it wasn't that already! Not only that, there has been a great deal of new building going on over the past year or so, and we are being given a brand-new chapel this coming June, with a spacious meeting room and an even larger Multi-Faith room. It's even got a lift going up to the first floor where all these facilities are situated. I didn't ask for a lift, but it's going to be a great help to me at least. Finally, my thanks must go to my two Chaplain's Assistants who visit the men in their cells and who give me such invaluable support.

*Canon Michael Bunce  
Catholic Prison Chaplain*

### **FIRST COMMUNION PROGRAMME & RECONCILIATION**

First Holy Communion Day this year is on 21<sup>st</sup> May when 40 children make their First Holy Communion. It may seem strange that there are only six classes for the children, but then we need to remember that our Preparation Programme relies heavily upon parental involvement and interest; the parents are asked to work with their children at home to augment the material that has been covered in the classes. To help them, Con Boyle meets the parents at the same time as the children are being instructed by Annie Keane, Anne Rooke

and myself. I usually take the parents, but this year for a change I thought I'd take one of the classes. I'm enjoying it, I must say. Another vital part of the Preparation Programme are the various liturgies we have with the children – the Penitential Liturgy, the Passover Liturgy on Maundy Thursday and the Passion Liturgy on Good Friday immediately spring to mind. Do, please, keep the children and their families very much in your prayers.

*Canon Michael Bunce  
Catechetical Team Co-ordinator*

### **CONFIRMATION**

Archbishop Kevin McDonald confirmed fifteen young members of St Thomas' parish on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2005. It was a wonderful occasion, warm and sunny, and a cause for great celebration.

The classes started in February and continued throughout the year, with a break during the summer holidays. All those taking part had a lot of fun, especially when we went to Pizza Hut for a pre-Confirmation meal in September. As with last year's Confirmation group, I was very impressed with the way all the members of the group behaved during our time at Pizza Hut: they are a credit to our parish.

I wish to express my deepest thanks to Liz Collins and Maria Saulnier for all the hard work they did in preparing this year's group for Confirmation. They encouraged and inspired those thinking of being confirmed, challenging the candidates and making them realise that Confirmation is not something that just happens when a person reaches a certain age but is a personal decision to take hold of and live the profession of faith made on our behalf by our Parents and Godparents at Baptism.

The next Confirmation will be on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, during Bishop John Hine's Visitation of the Parish. At the moment there are twelve candidates for Confirmation. Liz Collins is once again helping with catechesis; in Maria's absence, Alex Redman, who was confirmed last year, is also helping with catechesis; and as part of his Extended Pastoral Placement at St Thomas', Con Boyle is likewise assisting in the preparation of this year's candidates.

*Father Philip Seed  
Catechetical Team Co-ordinator*

### **KENT & CANTERBURY HOSPITAL**

Following on from the major changes at the Kent and Canterbury hospital during these past few years, the nature of chaplaincy work has changed. We are now seeing more patients coming from places other than Canterbury and

often staying for only a short period of time. Since January there has been an increase in the number of emergency call-outs to the hospital, which is a result of more people being sent to the Kent and Canterbury from the nursing homes in the area. The average age of patients seen by the chaplains has increased as a consequence of certain departments being transferred to the William Harvey, Ashford, or to QEQM, Margate.

As in the past, I want to express my thanks to Felicity Foreman, who organises the rota for Extraordinary Ministers visiting the Kent and Canterbury. I also wish to thank Deacon David Avery, Ruth and Peter Harrison, David Heap and Jean Pegg, who regularly visit the hospital to bring Holy Communion to the sick on Sunday and on other days. The number of people receiving Holy Communion has been on the increase in recent weeks and all of our Extraordinary Ministers give up much of their own time so that people in hospital can know they are at the centre of the Church's life. For their witness to Christ in this way our Extraordinary Ministers need the support and prayers of all in the parish.

Finally, I want to reiterate that if you know of someone else who is going into hospital, please inform the Presbytery. Unless we are told that someone has been admitted there is no way for us to know that Catholics are in the hospital requiring the sacraments.

*Father Philip Seed  
Hospital Chaplain*

### **11am CHOIR**

This has been a year of change for the eleven o'clock Choir. At Christmas we sadly said good-bye to Ann Moynihan, who had been with us since 1998. Ann had led our singing for seven years and had introduced us to much new music. However, she felt the time had come to move nearer her family, and she is now living happily in her new home in the Midlands; we thank her for all she did for St Thomas', and wish her well for the future.

We began to fear that the choir would not remain viable after Ann's departure, since we are such a small group. However, in January we were very fortunate that Christian Lumsden agreed to lead the choir. Christian is a wonderful organist and has much experience of music and liturgy. We welcome him, and are very pleased to have him with us.

Since we are such a small group (about seven of us on a good day, but sometimes fewer!), we are especially glad to welcome our occasional singers, some from the parish, and

also, some music students, who sing with us during the term-times.

As well as singing every Sunday at 11.0'clock, we are privileged to sing twice a year in the Cathedral – at the feast of the Translation of St Thomas in July, and at the Solemn Vespers of December 29<sup>th</sup>. We are indebted to Helen Natrass for the beautiful music at the Vespers. Helen also composes music for us to sing during Sunday masses, both psalms and motets, and we are very grateful for her many talents. We benefit too from the musicianship of John Carney, who often conducts us.

We were joined in the cathedral at the Solemn Vespers by the choir of St Dunstan's. It was wonderful to join together to form a much larger choir, and we all enjoyed the party afterwards! This is a tradition that we hope will continue. We have sung at St Dunstan's for the commemoration of St Thomas More on 11<sup>th</sup> July, for several years, and it is good to have links with another city church choir.

We practise in the church every Friday, from 7.30pm, ending around 9.00pm, with night prayer, and would very much welcome some new members. If you enjoy singing, and maybe can read music, do please consider joining us. We are glad of additional members, even if they are unable to sing every week. Singing in the choir gives a very special feeling of participation in the mass, and Friday practices are good preparation for the liturgy to come on Sunday. Please speak to any choir member if you would to join.

*Margaret Butchers  
Choir Mamber*

### **PRAYER GROUP**

The Prayer Group meets every Wednesday at 2.15pm in the Upper Room. A typical meeting consists of a time of spontaneous praise and thanksgiving, reflection on a passage of Scripture, a period of silence and listening to the Lord, a decade of the rosary and general intercessions. Individual prayer for healing is also available.

The group is part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. It's aim is to help members to be open to the special gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as healing, prophecy and praying in tongues, and to enter into a deeper relationship with Jesus as Lord.

Last summer, the prayer group presented 'This Promise is for You.' A series of video talks by Catholic speakers on 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Members also assisted at the annual 'Day of Renewal' at the Franciscan International Study Centre in February.

*Deacon David Avery*

### **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

There are 58 such Ministers authorized to serve in the parish. They help to administer Communion at all Sunday and weekday Masses, where there are not sufficient clergy officiating.

Another important part of their Ministry is taking Communion to those who are sick at home or in hospital. In this way, parishioners who are unable to get to Mass are reminded that they are still valued members of our community.

Each year, on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the Ministers publicly renew their commitment for a further twelve months.

*Deacon David Avery*

### **UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS (UCM)**

At the time of the last PPC AGM we were busy organising our summer programme. We had three very busy months ahead of us.

The recruitment week end proved to be extremely successful. Elizabeth Tindley from the Diocese gave very encouraging talks at all the Masses. In the newsletter from the Diocese she writes 'Canterbury (Foundation) asked me to give a talk at all the Masses. Canon Bunce agreed for me to do this and was very welcoming, as were all the members of the Canterbury Foundation, who gave out leaflets after all the Masses. We can only hope and pray that our words were heard by members of the congregation'.

Mary Hamblin, the newly elected Diocesan President also joined us for that week end and was very impressed by all the activities which take place here in the parish. The month of May also included our annual pilgrimage to Aylesford. We had a relaxing and prayerful day blessed with good weather. We were delighted to have the company of Sean O'Connor and his help throughout the day.

The highlight of June was the Ecumenical Service. It was a surprise to find that the fund- raising officer for Delmerza House, Sue Bedborough, our guest speaker is an ex-parishioner and an ex-pupil of St Thomas' School and was one of the first pupils at St Anselm's when it opened in 1964. It was interesting to hear her speak about the children's hospice and all embracing nature of their work. During the service a collection was taken which raised £130, which we presented to Sue later in the hall where refreshments were served for about 60 guests from the various churches in Canterbury.

Going into July we treated ourselves to a buffet lunch at the Franciscan Study Centre. It was a good way to round off the year. There were 50 members and friends including our priests. Canon Bunce celebrated Mass in the Franciscan Chapel. It's always a privilege to be at Mass in the peace and quiet of the centre away from the hustle of the city centre. The weather was beautiful for lunch in the garden and the food superb. We do thank Richard and Elaine for all their hard work.

At the end of July we had our annual garden party at Marjorie Price's home. This is a fund-raising event for the UCM's three charities, namely the Priests Fund, the Catholic Children's Society and Rest Homes. We sent a cheque to Southwark Diocese for £114 towards these charities.

We have had many guests to our meetings. Some have shared their talents as guest speakers while others have led us in spiritual reflections. Greta led us in a very thought provoking reflection on '*Towards Pentecost*' and again in November (by popular demand), she led us in another afternoon of reflection on Advent.

Pauline Ryan gave us an extremely interesting account of her visit to an Ashram in India. She illustrated her talk with many photographs and visual aids.

Barbara Markham gave us an afternoon of music related to Our Lady. Barbara talked us through the pieces she had selected and how they related to the psalms.

Two of our members, Marjery Craig and Marjorie Price, who so expertly arrange the church flowers, gave us a flower arranging demo. This was excellent and we all learnt a lot about how to get the best out of our cut flower arrangements. Marion Nash, the chairperson of St Thomas' School Governing Body gave us an insight into the present day policies of the Catholic School and Catholic Education in general. It was enlightening to learn of the hard work, time and effort put in by so many dedicated people.

In October we decided to have an afternoon out before the dark nights set in, so we set off for *The Devils Kneading Trough* overlooking the Wye Downs. We had a relaxing and enjoyable time together chatting over a cup of tea and toasted tea cakes. Five members also attended the Kent Area meeting held at Gillingham on the 10<sup>th</sup> October. It is good that we can have our Foundation represented at these meetings and it also helps us to keep in touch with other East Kent Foundations.

Recently we have enjoyed a talk and video on Compostella given by Elizabeth Murphy who

made a pilgrimage to Compostella last year, and Barbara Markham gave us another interesting afternoon with an enlightening talk on the Martyr's Shrine Ontario.

Con Boyle joined us for our meeting at the end of February and led us in a prayerful afternoon titled '*A Way to Prayer*'. All the members and guests found Con's talk up lifting and encouraging.

After Easter we concentrated on our summer programme, thinking mainly of the annual Pilgrimage to Aylesford, our 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations and our summer outing to the Horsebridge Art Centre.

We have received and accepted invitations from a number of churches in Canterbury, St Peter's, St Martin's, St Mildred's and the Baptist Church, to mention just a few.

Our members continue to play their full role in parish life, being involved in many of the church ministries, which include the Eucharistic ministry, church caring ministry, flower arranging, reading ministry etc.

Members also continue to exercise their ministry of caring. We have a welfare officer who keeps us informed about members and indeed parishioners who are sick or house bound. This year we decided to send the occasional card and a UCM newsletter to members who are house bound to let them know they are not forgotten and keep them informed of forthcoming events. We also make sure that all our house bound members receive their copy of the *Catholic Mother*. On the subject of welfare Marjery Craig our secretary, ordered special cards from the Association of Catholic Women which state that one is a catholic and 'in case of admission to hospital please contact a priest and that one would like their nursing care to include fluids, however administered'. There is a special strip across the bottom of the card which must be signed to make it valid. Marjery also arranged for our members who have sight problems to receive the *Catholic Mother* on audio tape.

At our AGM Mass on 12<sup>th</sup> June, we will celebrate the enrolment of thirteen new members and all the members will renew their UCM commitment.

So finally, to our celebration of the year! At the end of June we will be celebrating the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Foundation here in Canterbury, and to do so we have arranged to celebrate with Mass on Sunday evening 25<sup>th</sup> June, here in St Thomas' Church followed by a buffet supper in the hall for invited guests from the East Kent Foundations and the Diocesan Officers and Chaplain.

To conclude this report we would like to thank Canon Bunce for all his support and help and indeed all the clergy. We are also grateful to all the parishioners who never fail to support our group. May I as President, thank the loyal, kind and helpful members for the constant support they give me.

*Mary Reynolds  
President*

### **CHILDREN'S LITURGY**

It was back in September that I appealed for more helpers for Children's Liturgy. I said the Police Checks would be painless; perhaps so, but they have been very long-winded for clearance from the diocese and the Criminal Records Bureau, and by apologising to the families at the 11.00am Mass who are not able to join in Children's Liturgy. What was meant to protect our children seems to be reducing our ability to work with them. I am sorry, but this seems to be out of my hands.

We are not entirely marking time though. Our Holy Week ceremonies with children are now well established, so we have begun to look how we prepare for Christmas. The Advent Jesse Tree and calendar continue to be popular, and we brought these together for a children's Advent service in the last days before the feast. Some beautiful and tasty star-shaped biscuits were baked, decorated, and hung on the tree, with other symbols from the Old and New Testaments.

This year, 2006, we have a challenge for you all. Can you help the people in the Christmas Story get to the stable?

In many Latin American parishes, crib figures of Mary and Joseph travel from one family to another, stopping a night in each home before moving on to the next. The families pray around the pilgrims, one or both families together. Others join Mary and Joseph's pilgrimage: shepherds, sheep, angels, the star, the Magi. On Christmas Eve, the last family brings all the figures to church and the crib is set up.

This is something we could do, so let's do it! We have a well-loved crib inside our church, but none in our 'front window' – beside the church hall door for all the world to see. So we need a crib and figures to put in it. We'll have to make them. Rebecca would like to knit baby Jesus, but that still leaves: Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, sheep... We should make something beautiful that we will be proud to display for years to come. Anyone under 120 years old is welcome to help design and make the figures and the stable. We will arrange a workshop before

Advent to bring everything together but we need to plan well in advance.

Come and help design and make an heirloom for our parish! Knitters, seamstresses and tailors, woodworkers and artists, come and help!

*Please contact Maurice Billingsley: 458027 or maurice.billingsley1@btopenworld.com*

### **THE PARISH SCHOOLS ST ANSELM'S**

The Catholic witness of our secondary school, St Anselm's, reaches out to all parts of the Canterbury deanery and to other parts of Kent. I have been most impressed by the effort put in by so many people at St Anselm's to ensure that the Liturgy is celebrated in a dignified and enthusiastic manner. Often when I am celebrating the weekly Friday Mass I am reminded of Bethlehem: so many people come that we have to get extra chairs, people are standing in the corners, 'no room in the inn', the truths of the Gospel made present in life of the school.

Other services during the liturgical year have been superbly done, in particular the Advent and Lent penitential services. The use of images, words, music that bring home the eternal truths of our Catholic lives has been excellent. They have been thought provoking and challenging; and I know that some ideas have been plagiarised by the assistant priest at St Thomas' when thoughts have not been forthcoming for Sunday homilies.

This year will see a number of changes in the RE department at St Anselm's. I wish to express my especial thanks to Ann Donnelly, Jo Ferguson and Martin Campion for all the help they have given the priests who visit St Anselm's during the school year. All of you will be very much missed: I wish you all the best in your new posts. I also want to thank all those involved in preparing the music for the various liturgical celebrations at St Anselm's: I know how much effort, hard work and sheer enthusiasm you give during these celebrations. And finally, I want to thank my fellow-priests, Fr Stephen Wymer, Fr Ben Lodge, Fr Francis Kemsley, Fr Wilfred McGreal and Fr James Sweeney, for all that they have done at St Anselm's.

*Father Philip Seed  
School Chaplain*

### **ST THOMAS' SCHOOL**

St Thomas' School held a successful summer fair on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2005. Families of the children at the school as well as many parishioners supported the event, first by buying the very attractive programmes (with a

lucky draw number), which were sold after all Masses over two weekends, and secondly by attending the event itself. £1,700 was raised, to be spent as and when needed by the school.

Before he left to go back to Nigeria in October, Father Sylvester came to talk to Year 6 and encouraged the children to establish links between St Thomas' and the pupils at his small school. The pupils gave him £400 which had been raised throughout the year. A further £589 was raised before Christmas through a Year 1 cake sale, a Year 6 disco and also through the very generous donations of parents following the Infants' Christmas Production at school and the Key Stage 2 Advent Service in the church. The school is awaiting Fr Sylvester's return in the summer to hand him over the money raised. St Thomas' School is committed to supporting Fr Sylvester as much as it can.

Con Boyle worked with a group of Year 6 pupils over the course of a term: they reflected together on the Mass and made a presentation to the rest of the class. Fr Philip recently completed a follow-up to Con Boyle's work, explaining the significance of the Mass to Year 6. The school plans to spread this programme down to Yr 5, Yr 4 and Yr 3.

Throughout the year, all the pupils have benefited from very informative and enjoyable class visits to the church under the guidance of Fr Philip who made everyone feel very welcome. Fr Philip also spends time with the children, in class, almost every Wednesday and celebrates mass at school once a term.

*Marie-Claire Renn  
School Governor*

### **SCRIPTURE GROUPS**

There is now one main Scripture Group which meets in the Upper Room on a Thursday afternoon. The former Cossington Road Scripture Group has amalgamated with the group which developed from Cafe.

The ethos of the Scripture Group is to give a little time to develop a greater understanding and insight into the Scriptures, especially gaining a deeper awareness of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments.

The group is supportive to all members. There is a warm and welcoming invitation to anyone who would like to share this time looking at the Scripture in preparation for the Sunday Mass, which becomes more meaningful.

*Co-ordinators  
Jean Pegg 01227-453856  
& Fran Connellan 01227-760994.*

### **CHURCH CARERS**

As suggested by Chris Bull, I am not writing this report as Church Carer as I am no longer responsible for the cleaning. However, I still do my stint of cleaning and recently washed and oiled all the statues.

*Church Linen.* The number of new items continues to rise and now totals 207 items. It is an on-going task as we lose some of them through wear and tear.

*Laundry.* I now wash and iron approximately 40 items each week. This becomes a problem if I plan to take a holiday (which isn't very often), as nobody is willing to take on the task. This is also one reason why I keep the sacristy rather overstocked with linen so as to cover the time I am away.

*Franciscan Study Centre.* Just before Christmas I was asked to make 46 items of church linen for the above centre. I therefore made 2 altar cloths, 24 purificators and 20 lavabo towels. All had to be sewn and embroidered with crosses. I provided the linen which should last the centre for the next 50 years. I do not charge for this act of love.

*Special Items.* One special job was the lengthening of Con's alb which was far too short for him. I did this by adding a piece of linen and creating a false hem. Another job was repairing of the pink tabernacle veils which were damaged soon after I made them two years ago. This was a really tricky job as I could not match the original lace.

*U.C.M.* As a member of the UCM, I have been asked to make a new banner for use at outdoor events such as pilgrimages, as the standard banner is far too heavy to carry and negotiate in a coach or a car. I have therefore sketched an image of Our Lady which I am now busy embroidering. I plan to have the new banner ready for the annual pilgrimage to Aylesford on 30<sup>th</sup> May.

*Barbara Markham*

### **THE ECUMENICAL SOCIETY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

All the meetings were held in the upper room at St Thomas' Church, Canterbury. The speaker was Mrs Joan Crosland on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2005. The subject of talk: *Apparitions of Our Lady in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

We visited St Andrew's Church, Deal, on Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2005.

Other meetings we had were on the following dates and with talks on the following subjects:

19<sup>th</sup> September, 2005: *'Pilgrimages and Our Lady'*. The speaker was Chris Bull.

3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2005: *Devotion to Our Lady in Malta.* The speaker was Barbara Markham.

5<sup>th</sup> December, 2005: *Our Lady of the Pillar*.  
The speaker was Ms Carolyn Morrison.

13<sup>th</sup> March, 2006: *The Church in Venezuela*. The speaker was Mrs Rosa Lugo.  
*Sister Margaret Mary O'Grady, L.S.U.*  
*Secretary ESBVM*

### **KENT COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS & JEWS**

27<sup>th</sup> April, 2005, in St Peter's C/E church parish room, Doctor John Arnold gave a talk on '*The Miracle*' by Boris Pasternak, a Jewish Christian poet.

The various social and religious themes of the areas that the speaker covered, included great hope for the future of the world and much faith in the Almighty, all of which had been acquired through suffering.

On 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2005, a group of the Canterbury CCJ visited the Jewish museum, at Raymond Burton House, Albert Street, Camden Town, London. A museum guide gave a talk on the chief contents of the building after which, groups were encouraged to study areas of interest, which they found most enlightening and inspiring.

On 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2005, at St Edmund's Hall, Beckenham, a group of the Canterbury CCJ joined the local group for a discussion on the Anti-Semitism in Christopher Marlowe's play '*The Jew of Malta*'. In turn, both the Jews and the Christian speakers aired their views on the subject and then invited the participants into the general discussion, which ended amicably. The meeting closed with the encouraging information that the Chief Rabbi of Rome had been a close friend of the late Pope John Paul II.

On 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2005, at St Mildred's church, Mr Sean Ireton gave a talk on the *Samaritan People of Israel*.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2006, in Canterbury Cathedral, Canon Clare Edwards led a candlelight pilgrimage.

On 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2006, in the Salvation Army Hall, Canterbury, Doctor Gareth Gilmour talked about daily life in Samaria and Israel in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. The talk was most enlightening and helpful.

*Sister Margaret Mary O'Grady, L.S.U.*

### **ALTAR SERVERS**

As a rule, I serve the 8.00am, 11.00am and 6pm Sunday Masses. (The Saturday 6.00pm and Sunday 9.30am Masses usually have 3 servers each). Naturally enough, I serve at the weekday Masses also.

Chris Strudley (godson of Tina Hamilton) has learnt to serve since I have been here – this

commenced last autumn with the Tuesday Mass.

The 9.30am Sunday Mass will soon lose the services of Chip Campion. The family move to Manchester in July or August. This will mean that Harry Billingsley will replace him as lead server at that Mass.

There is an altar servers' rally at Aylesford on Bank Holiday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006, commencing with Mass at 11.30am. I will be attending. A further four of our servers will attend, with their families where appropriate. We will all meet at a pre-arranged vantage point.

I will inform the First Holy Communion parents of this event. They may like to look in on it, since their children will be eligible to become altar servers once they have made their First Holy Communion. I would envisage, from June onwards, the possibility of First Holy Communion candidates, who so wished, 'shadowing' current altar servers.

*Cornelius Boyle*  
*Seminary Student*

### **ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (S.V.P.)**

St Thomas' SVO Conference had a rather eventful year. We managed our normal 'works': regular visiting, helping individuals in immediate material need, putting on a Christmas party, arranging a summer coach trip, and supporting twinned SVP conferences in India. But we experienced some difficulties in the process. Last year I reported a healthy membership list. Soon after, three members – two of them experienced, long-standing members of the Conference – left Canterbury for pastures new. We wish them well. But at the time we wondered whether we'd be able to continue doing as much as we had done. Canon Bunce responded very generously to our plea for help on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> February, when we were allowed the privilege of making an appeal for new members during Holy Mass. The move proved very successful and rejuvenated our ranks with something like 11 or 12 people signalling a definite interest in joining, either as Permanent or Associate members. While the number of the committed has yet to settle down, we can say that we have stabilised our position.

To return to the 'works' of the last year, on 23<sup>rd</sup> July we took a coach party to Minster Abbey. A very lovely day was had by all. We looked around the animal sanctuary and then watched a funny northern man tell his jokes and fly his owls and birds of prey over the heads of some very brave young lads and lassies, who'd saved our honour by

volunteering for the stunt. Father George then said Mass for us in the beautiful chapel. It was great to have his company throughout the day. (By the way, we'd love to have you with us again this summer, Father George!). We wolfed down the lunch we'd packed before boarding the coach and sitting back to enjoy a drive around the east Kent coast. On 18<sup>th</sup> December a good number attended the SVP Christmas Party in the Parish Hall. We had some great music thanks to our friends from the Choir of the 9.30 a.m. Sunday Mass, and to a young saxophonist – what talent there is in the parish! We also hired a magician who fascinated many of the young partygoers (and not a few of the older ones) with his humour and sleight of hand. Other activities centring on Christmas included that task of distributing gifts on behalf of the *Lord Mayor of Canterbury Christmas Gift Fund* and the *Canterbury United Municipal Charities* respectively.

In between these events we continued with our regular visiting and the helping of individuals referred to us by the *KCC Social Services* and other caring agencies. Over the past year the latter having included a mother needing help with paying for piano lessons for her child; a single mum trying to improve her job prospects by taking a course in childcare (we helped with the nursery fees for her own child); people needing funds to travel to other towns and cities to access opportunity for accommodation and employment; families and single people who couldn't afford to purchase cookers, TVs, school uniforms and furniture. The Conference continues to provide financial help to two twinned SVP conferences in India. One of these conferences recently wrote to tell us about the work they'd been enabled to do as a result, sponsoring the marriage of a poor girl and making available books and school uniforms to poor people in their area. In another project, we've agreed to pay for the building of a house for a poor family.

Much – most – of this work would not have been possible without the fantastic support we receive from the parish through the monthly Door Collection which Canon Bunce allows us to take at the church door after weekend Masses. The Door Collection is usually between £300 and £400 each month. Our thanks go to the many kind people who support our work in this and in other ways.

*Mark Bateson*  
*Out-going President*

### **100 CLUB**

Not such a successful year for the 100 Club, because we only had 89 paid up members. This means that we had to reduce the fortnightly prizes to £15, instead of £20, so that we could keep the four lucky winners at the Grand Draw (AGM) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May to £250 each.

The 100 Club is obviously a 'bit of fun' whereby the parish gains the sum of £1000 every year and parishioners and friends win a few extra ££ along the way.

This year let us get back to our full complement of 100 members so that we can give out the full prize money of two monthly winners of £20 and four winners at the AGM of £250. Look for the membership form in the newsletter, fill it in and return it to Brenda in the presbytery.

We must particularly thank Brenda for the everyday running of the 100 Club after the retirement of Hugh Sullivan. Thanks Brenda and good luck to all our members.

**Ron Arcari**  
**100 Club Organiser**

### **THE SOLITUDE GROUP**

For over five years, on the third Saturday of the month, we meet at *Greyfriars*, Stour Street, to spend the morning in silence and prayer in a group setting. We find this enormously supportive and enriching. In the summer we extend the morning to a shared lunch in the gardens. Once yearly, led by a Franciscan Friar, we are able to enjoy a weekend retreat away in a contemplative setting. This year we are leading a five-week course on personal prayer methods in the parish. If you would like to know more, then please telephone me on 01227 450491.

*Sister Frances Slater*

### **PRAYER GUIDANCE**

This year we began to offer one-to-one prayer guidance to those who wish to make use of this opportunity to deepen their personal prayer life. Those who come express gratitude for the experience of talking about their spirituality and sharing their search for God's plan in their lives. We use a room in Link Lane (behind the church). For further details send a stamped address envelope to: Prayer Guidance, 1 Link Lane, Canterbury CT1 2AF

*Sister Frances Slater*

### **ST MARTIN'S HOSPITAL**

In some respects our Ministry at St Martin's Hospital is much the same as reported last year. We visit eight wards and are available to

talk with all the patients (ages 18 to 65+) of any or no faith. We are also available to talk with staff and visitors.

We continue to hold a Holy Communion Service weekly in the chapel on Wednesdays before we visit the wards. Attendance varies. However, we continue with this Service as it is important to bring the sacramental Presence of Our Lord to St Martin's. Judith brings her guitar and provides our music, and most weeks, if he is not attending meetings, the Lead Chaplain, Reverend Peter Richmond (plus guitar) also joins us. Peter is very supportive of our work. Our thanks are due to Peter and Judith for providing the music and to Rob and other staff members for bringing patients to the Chapel. Quite often, those present will, at the end of the Service, request more hymns and songs, and we all share a time of fellowship.

The Chaplaincy Team is ecumenical, and most month we have a training meeting or a quiet afternoon. These are instructive and interesting and cover many topics including mental health and ill-health, changes in NHS plans, any problems we encounter in our visiting and much more. As in other hospital ministries, it is frustrating that we are unable to enquire if any Catholics have been admitted.

Father Philip Seed is the Catholic Chaplain to St Martin's and visits any patients who request a visit. We are very thankful for his prayers, help and support in our work.

Alas, we have to report that Judith has needed to stop ministering at St Martin's for a while. We miss her very much (not only for her music) and hope she will re-join us soon. We are glad to report that God worked some of His "co-incidences" and round about the time that Judith stopped visiting, Seminarian Cornelius (Con) Boyle came to our parish and is now a greatly valued member of our team. Welcome, Con, and thank you. If anyone thinks they might like to join our team, then please contact Father Philip Seed, or any other member of the Chaplaincy team. Or you might consider coming to the Chapel at St Martin's on Wednesdays at 2.30 p.m. for the Holy Communion Service. You will be most welcome. The Service lasts 20-30 minutes (depending on the singing). Come and sing and see part of our Ministry in action.

*Jean Johnson*

*Chaplaincy Team Member*

#### **MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON MONDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2005.**

**Mass** was celebrated at 7pm. The meeting then adjourned to the church hall and was reconvened at 7.45pm.

**Present:** Chris Bull (Chairman), Canon Bunce, Father Philip Seed, Father George Marsden, Deacon David Avery, members of the Parish Pastoral Council and Parishioners.

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Father Richard Bateman, Jean Johnson, Barbara Markham and Mike Garside.
2. **To receive any other business.** Sue Purbrick spoke about the financial committee's report and the implications arising from it.
3. **Minutes of the AGM held on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2004**, were accepted as a true report. Proposer: Brian Molloy. Seconded: Jonathan Butchers.
4. **Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising from the minutes. Two matters arose from the Annual Report. Referring to her talk on St Therese of Lisieux to the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Leslie Smith wished the sentence beginning: 'The effect of her entry into Carmel...' to be omitted. Deacon David pointed out that his second report should have been titled 'Extraordinary Ministers of Communion'. Greta McHugh challenged the ambiguity of the word 'Communion'.
5. **The Chairman's Report.** Chris wished to add that this year is the year of the Eucharist and that every Saturday there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 11am – 11.30am. Sean O'Connor, our Seminarian, leaves us in June, so in July, August and September a Eucharistic Minister will be needed to put the Host in the Monstrance. The guidelines for Eucharist Ministers have been clarified and Fr Philip Seed explained them. The Chalice should be purified only by the priest or the deacon. At the Communion the Chalice is given to the deacon first and then the priest gives the extraordinary ministers the chalice. They don't give it to each other. Similarly with the Host. This is to heighten the reverence. John Renn objected to all these details. He felt the inner attitude was more important.
6. **Finance Committee's Report.** Sue Purbrick was of the opinion that the Finance Committee's report contained certain inaccuracies. After some

discussion, Ron Arcari proposed a vote of confidence in the committee. A vote was then taken and the Finance Committee was supported unanimously.

7. **Parish Priest's Report.** Canon Bunce took it that his written report had been read and asked if any clarifications were needed.

RCIA. It was noted the RCIA was in abeyance; however a good number of converts were being instructed by the Canon and by Fr Philip. The practical instruction/initiation happens at Mass. However, the RCIA needs to be re-launched, so that those inquirers are accepted by the community, which gives support and prayer.

Canon expressed how much he values the ministry of the parish clergy: Fr George with Masses and the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Fr Philip, who is his mainstay. This ministry is very much appreciated, always cheerful, positive and willing, sometimes accident prone!

Fr Richard is in America. Still working two years after his operation, wanting to do as much as he can.

Deacon David, quiet and non-confrontational, giving instructions, visiting, officiating at cremations.

Fr Sylvester is coming in July and August. Frances Gerth is organising a concert in the church on 13<sup>th</sup> June to raise funds for Fr Sylvester's School.

Sean O'Connor, our seminarian, visits St Anselm's School, the hospital, the prison and helps in the sacristy. Brian Molloy proposed a vote of thanks to him. Canon Bunce thanked all the parishioners.

8. **Any Other Business.** There was none.  
9. **Draw for 100 Club.** Brenda was thanked for taking over from Hugh Sullivan. By last May there were only 80 members, but Cyril Adam bought the remaining 20 tickets.

A cheque for £1000 was given to Canon Bunce. The winners of the draw with prizes of £250 were: number 63, Pat Gill, 33, Peter Harrison, 58, Elizabeth Simpson, 100 Teresa Woolmer.

10. **The Closing Prayer** was led by Fr Philip.  
11. **Refreshments** were provided.

#### **Agenda for the A.G.M. on May, 2006.**

1. Opening Prayer (Mass at 7.00 p.m.)
2. Apologies for absence
3. To Receive Any Other Business (already tabled)

4. Minutes of the AGM held on 9th May 2005.
5. Matters Arising (not appearing on the Agenda)
6. Chairman's Report
7. Finance Committee's Report
8. Parish Priest's Report
9. Any Other Business (*already tabled*)
10. Draw for the 100 Club
11. Closing Prayer
12. Refreshments

#### **NOTES**

*In order to keep this Annual Report as short as possible, it has been necessary in some cases to shorten or edit articles.*

*If you have any items you would like to have tabled under Any Other Business, then please submit these to Brenda by Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2006.*