

## **Report of the Chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council for 2008 – 2009**

I heard the other day that someone over 80 years old seems to have breakfast every five minutes! Although we have not reached this stage yet, in this my sixth report, I seem to be writing them every other day. This of course is the conundrum of time.

Almost certainly, the most important thing that has happened in our Parish over the last year has been the death of Father Richard Bateman in early December. I was present at his ordination to the Diaconate and to the Priesthood and his Ministry within our Parish, which was truly wonderful. He was a very prayerful man and I think he would agree with me that he would like to make the words of St Theresa of Lisieux 'I mean to spend my time in Heaven doing good on earth' his own. The poignancy of his death was brought home to me by the death of my own sister in December, following on from that of her grandson, Carl, who died just before his fourth birthday of cerebral cancer earlier in the year. Our support and prayers go to Ann, Father Richard's wife.

Last year, we had much involvement in Archbishop Kevin MacDonald's initiative, under the heading 'A Vision for the Diocese'. He has produced his first reflections on all the consultations that were made. He underlines that the way forward is for each Parish to become 'Parishes of Prayer'. We should therefore try to have more Prayer groups and more Scripture groups. From these will follow, inevitably, what we are looking for; Vocations and Evangelisation.

Fr Tom Herbst has given two series of talks to help in the important realm of Adult Formation. In the Autumn, he gave ten Tuesday evening talks on 'Themes from Ancient Antiquity'. His easy style, ready humour and obvious erudition meant we understood the background behind the early Councils of the Church and this hopefully makes us recite the Nicene Creed every Sunday at Mass with renewed insight and fervour. Many interesting characters were met on the way, but my favourite is certainly St Cyril of Alexandria. Holy, bombastic, belligerent and nearly always right!

In Lent, Fr Herbst attempted, with no little success, to explain the complexities of St Paul's Epistle to the Romans. This is a very important Christian document, because it was erroneously used by Martin Luther to justify his idiosyncratic 'Justification by Faith'. Father Tom showed unequivocally that this was in fact incorrect, but he dwelt on the wonderful message of God's Grace given to us so freely in the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Once again our sincere thanks to Fr Tom.

All the usual Parish programmes are in place as the Reports that follow show. Please go on, some depart and the rest of us continue, but one day, we will all meet as St Thomas More said, 'merrily in heaven'.

*Chris Bull – Chairman PPC*

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

As usual, much of what I wanted to say has already been said by Chris Bull! I should just like to reiterate and reinforce what he wrote about Father Richard Bateman, the 'Vision for the Diocese' process and the talks given by Father Tom Herbst O.F.M. I should like to add that Father Tom has agreed to give a further series of five talks on the Second Vatican Council beginning on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> May. I also suspect that he will be happy to give another series in the autumn. I am also grateful to him for the way in which he involves himself in the parish by celebrating Mass.

As I write this, various 'bits and pieces' spring to mind. Firstly, I must say one or two words about the CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks currently taking place in the parish. I need to emphasise that this is now a legal requirement; in other words I, as parish priest, have the legal obligation to ensure that every person involved with children or vulnerable adults has been checked. Our Diocesan Child Protection Commission has made it abundantly clear that everyone without exception – even those who are Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and who do *not* take Holy Communion to the Sick and the Housebound – need to be CRB checked. Every parish now has to have a person responsible for the huge task of CRB-checking. I am most grateful to Margaret Butchers who has kindly undertaken this gargantuan task on my behalf. Thank you, Margaret.

Then I need to say a few words about St. Thomas' Shop: thanks to our small but very willing band of helpers, the Shop is now open seven days a week. Tony Cassidy did a huge amount of work bringing the Shop into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and our present band of helpers has carried on the good work initiated by him. I am very grateful for their involvement in this ministry – which is what it is. The Shop not only sells things; it is also a 'window' looking into the Church.

Very much part and parcel of the parish are our two Catholic schools. St Thomas' School, under the leadership of Mr Dominic McBride, grows from strength to strength, and St Anselm's School, under its new Head Teacher, Ms Fiona Quilty, continues to flourish and expand. I count myself very fortunate in having these two schools in the parish.

There are so many parish groups and activities buzzing away in the background that it would be invidious to single out groups and people. However, having said that, I count it a great blessing to have in the parish the Union of Catholic Mothers, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Children's Liturgy Team, and the many other groups and people in the parish who do all sorts of jobs quietly, efficiently, and without making a fuss. Thank you, everyone, even if your name wasn't mentioned!

And then I need to thank the Financial Advisory Committee which often prevents my reaching for the hemlock, the Presbytery Staff who give Father Richard and me invaluable support, and the many other helpers in the parish whose names I cannot possibly list – there are too many of them. Thank you, everyone.

*Canon Michael Bunce  
Parish Priest*

### **CANTERBURY PRISON**

I spend every Monday morning and afternoon as Duty Chaplain in the prison in Longport. One great change – a pleasant one - which has come about as a result of the prison now holding Foreign Nationals only is that the Sunday Mass attendance has shot up. On average we get between 25 – 30 men attending the Sunday prison Mass at 10.45 a.m.: there is a real feeling of prayer and devotion.

I am part of an inter-Faith Chaplaincy Team. Quite apart from the Christian Chaplains (Anglican, Catholic, Methodist and Salvation Army), our team also has a Muslim Chaplain, a Jewish Rabbi, a Hindu and a Sikh Chaplain, not forgetting our Buddhist and Mormon Chaplains! We all get on famously, without any rivalry or poaching. I sometimes think that the model we have established over the past couple of years should be exported to the trouble spots in the world where there is religious strife!

The prison is a very busy place with a lot going on. I am indebted to my two Catholic Chaplain's Assistants who readily involve themselves in that busyness.

*Canon Michael Bunce  
Catholic Prison Chaplain*

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

This year 34 children will be making their First Holy Communion on 15<sup>th</sup> June. We have kept to the usual and well-tested structure (the parents meet whilst the children are having their classes), but we've had to stretch everything out to fit around the new timetabling of the school year. There is now a longer gap between each class (not a bad thing!), and First Holy Communion Day is now in June and not in May, as in previous years.

I have around me a superb and dedicated team of Catechists, without which the Programme simply wouldn't happen. Thank you, Team, for all that you do in the formation of our children.

*Canon Michael Bunce*

*Catechetical Team Co-ordinator*

### **CONFIRMATION**

At the time of writing we have received twenty applications from young people wishing to be confirmed. The preparation programme will begin on Pentecost Sunday and will run on Sunday afternoons followed by 6pm Mass. There is a team of Catechists who will be helping the young people to prepare for this important step in their spiritual life.

Bishop John Hine will administer the sacrament of Confirmation during the 11am Mass on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July.

*Father Richard Hearn*

### **KENT & CANTERBURY HOSPITAL**

Kent & Canterbury Hospital continues to be a place of change, not least in the Chaplaincy. The full-time Anglican chaplain Rev Keith Fazzani now only attends two days per week and there is no longer a Sunday service; there continues to be a service on a Wednesday. There were several reasons for discontinuing the Sunday service not least that patients are, as far as possible, sent home at weekends.

Despite the reduction in the full-time presence of a chaplain the ecumenical team of chaplaincy volunteers do sterling work in ensuring every ward is visited during the course of the week.

The dedicated staff are always helpful and understanding of the work the chaplains and chaplaincy volunteers undertake.

Our committed team of Extraordinary Ministers continue to ensure that Holy Communion is taken to the patients on Sundays and at other times. There have been some changes in the team this year. Jean Pegg stepped down after many years of dedicated service to the hospital both as a member of staff and as a Eucharistic Minister. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jean publicly for her tremendous work over the years. It was Jean who introduced me to the hospital when I arrived and her vast knowledge of the place helped me to hit the ground running. Thank you!

I would also like to thank Felicity Foreman, Ruth and Peter Harrison and David Heap who continue to visit the hospital regularly and to welcome and thank Anne Rooke who has joined the team. I am immensely grateful for all they do in ministering to the sick.

Finally, as per my contribution last year, it is essential that you let the presbytery office know if you or someone you know is in hospital. The various rules mean that patients are not automatically asked when admitted if they would like to see a priest or receive communion. Unless we are told by you there is no way of us knowing.

*Father Richard Hearn  
Hospital Chaplain*

### **THE SOLITUDE GROUP**

The Solitude Group continues to meet from 9 – 11.45am on the third Saturday of each month at Greyfriars Chapel in Stour Street. This year, we were sad to say goodbye to one of our founder members, Sister Frances Slater, who has returned to work in Ecuador. One other founder member, Pauline Ryan, has decided that after 8 years, she will step down from the core leadership group. We extend our thanks and warm appreciation to them both for introducing us to a form of prayer that we find immensely enriching.

We have, once again, been on a weekend retreat to Ladywell and our numbers continue to grow. Joan Blows has developed one of the prayerboards at the back of the church, with Scripture based reflections and ideas for personal prayer.

Further information can be found on the noticeboard in the church foyer and we extend a warm welcome to anyone who may wish to join us on either a regular or occasional basis.

*Louise Beesley and Roberta Johnson*

### **11am CHOIR**

Aims: To lead congregational worship by means of strong musical encouragement at Mass; to help lift the mind and heart of the people unto God.

To provide well rehearsed choral music at Holy Communion and Gregorian Chant when required (once per month).

Members: Allan Christian Lumsden, BA (Oxon), L.TCL, (A.R.C.O. (ex.)), A.Mus.TCL (Organist/Director of Music); Helen Natrass (Assistant), Mr & Mrs Jonathan and Margaret Butchers; Mr Christopher Smith, Dr Mark Bateson; Mr John Carney, Mr Timothy le Lean and Mrs Ann Bateman.

### **Report for the Year 2007/08:**

#### **A. Music**

We have endeavoured to satisfy the aforementioned aims by focusing upon one genre of the Roman Catholic repertoire. Since our choir consists of more men than women at the moment, we have chosen to pursue, both scholastically and practically, the Gregorian repertoire of the Roman Catholic tradition (see SC1 6:116. This is because this music is sung in unison (no choral parts needed.)

Satisfying the scholastic element was achieved by organising Gregorian workshops; there were two such events this year. These events were planned and organised by Ms Helen Natrass and Mr Timothy le Lean in consultation with the Director of Music. The first of these workshops was led by Dr Mary Berry of Newnham College Cambridge, and her assistants in October 2007. This was well received and attended by Catholics as well as Christians of other confessions; non-Christian participants were also welcomed, the premise being that this would be a source of ecumenical collegiality between all interested sects. The role of the mediaeval church modes in both sacred and profane music was explored towards a deeper knowledge of the Propers of the Roman Catholic Mass (*Novus Ordo*). This has helped us in this regard and has supplied the intellectual foundations for a more confident musical offering of Gregorian Chant at Mass. This was the beginning of an improvement in Gregorian praxis.

The second of these workshops was organised and arranged in a similar manner to the first. This occurred in February of this year (2008). The Nuns of Minster Abbey were engaged for this event. Mother Nicola of Minster Abbey led the discussions and lectures at this workshop. Presently, the choir are even more confident and we have been using more of the Gregorian Proper of the Mass in the

Liturgy. However, the need for good translations of the ancient Latin texts is paramount and the Director of Music has embarked upon free translations of the texts of the Latin Propers sung at Mass; these texts are provided along with the music at Mass, thus demystifying the chants and offering the theological riches of these texts to the people.

In addition to this, the Divine Office has been introduced to public Parish worship this year. We have had the Roman Offices of Lauds (coupled with the readings from the Office of Readings) and Vespers; Lauds during the Holy Triduum and Solemn vespers on Low Sunday. The music for these events was set to modal music by the Director of Music and his Assistant, with much success the emphasis being simplicity.

The Solemn Vespers of St Thomas in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral was set to music by the Assistant. The motet (Palestrina's *Opem Nobis O Thoma*) was sung by a combined choir consisting of friends from St Dunstan's Church of England and St Thomas of Canterbury Roman Catholic Church. This was well received by both Churches, Mr Matthew Butchers gave assistance with some of the organ music.

The ancient Office of Tenebrae was celebrated for the second time in the Parish on Wednesday (March 19, 2008). The Director of Music organised this; the Assistant and himself wrote and planned the music for Tenebrae. The aim of this Office is to provide a spiritually contemplative space for the Parish to prepare for the Sacred Triduum. This was augmented from last year with the addition of polyphonic Responsories between the psalms; moments of silence were orchestrated to punctuate the psalmody. A reading from the Patristic repertoire was added, viz. from St Athanasius of Alexandria on the 'Triumph of Cross over Death'. This Office was prayed in minimal artificial light – in the traditional way; people attended it from the Parish as well as those from the Anglican Communion.

It is our purpose to bring together the theological threads of the liturgy by means of the music we sing. In this way, like St Augustine of Hippo, we bring together both text and human affect for the purposes of 'lifting mens hearts and minds to God' (SC 2:1; 6:120) – through the gift of song, we pray twice (De Confessione 2, IV:4).

#### **B. Problems, Matters arising and Conclusion.**

We are in need of new female voices. In order to remedy this, we have embarked upon private outreach, i.e. individual members (listed above) inquire via word-of-mouth. However, we would need time at Mass to make a public appeal.

In order to expand upon the known repertoire of Ordinaries and Hymns, it might be prudent to review the use of the current Hymnal. It is suggested to the Council that *Laudate* be considered to replace the current Hymnal. This is because *Laudate* consists of more Ordinaries of the Mass (in English), which would benefit the congregational singing of other settings of the Ordinary and a wider variety of hymns and songs (which are well composed).

The Organ in the Church requires some extra care. In this care, I recommend a comprehensive overhaul of the mechanism. In this way, we do not have to send for the Organ builders as often as we do. (Sticking rackers, broken rods, coupler problems and pedal malfunctions (during Mass)! Are a result of old material which needs replacing.)

In conclusion, we enjoy serving at the 11am Mass. We strongly feel that we are fulfilling the aforementioned objectives and aims. In this regard, we are pursuing a traditional path, but one which is always progressive (within the parameters of good taste). Finally, we are confident that our Ministry has made a favourable impact upon Parish life this year and look forward to improving upon our efforts in the future.

*Allan Christian Lumsden  
Director of Music/Organist, April 28, 2008*

#### **READING AT SUNDAY MASS**

If you are interested in reading at Mass, please contact the appropriate person through Brenda Lippert at the parish office (462896).

Saturday Vigil 18.00	Tony & Erica Grace
Sunday 8.00	Phyllis Stirton
9.30	Mike Garside
11.00	Lesley Smith
18.00	Brian Molloy

Please note that all readers should attend the workshop to be led by Fr Gerard Bradley, Director of St John's Seminary, Womersley, in St Thomas' Hall on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> from 10.30 until 16.00. Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided.

*Lesley Smith*

## **PRAYER GROUP**

The Prayer Group meets on Wednesday at 2.15pm in the Upper Room. Each meeting lasts for an hour and typically consists of a period of spontaneous praise and thanksgiving, a reflection on a passage of Scripture for the following Sunday, a time of listening to the Lord, a decade of the rosary and general intercessions. Individual prayer for healing is available, if requested.

The group is part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. Its aim is to help members to be open to the special gifts of the Holy Spirit such as healing, prophecy and praying in tongues. These gifts should be a normal part of Christian life, and are not reserved for saints or very holy people.

In March, members of the group assisted at the annual Day of Renewal at the Franciscan International Study Centre.

The Prayer Group also supports the work of the Cyrenians by financial contributions.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February this year, the group celebrated 30 years of continuous existence in St Thomas' parish. *Deacon David Avery*

## **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

There are 51 such ministers actively serving in the parish. They are called 'extraordinary' to distinguish them from the 'ordinary' or 'ordained' ministers who are the bishops, priests and deacons.

Their most important function is to take communion to people who are housebound or in hospital. In this way, those who are unable to get to Mass are reminded that they are still valued members of the parish community.

Extraordinary Ministers also assist with giving communion at Mass, when there are not sufficient clergy officiating.

Each year, on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the ministers publicly renew their commitment for a further 12 months. A Day of Recollection for all the ministers of the Canterbury Deanery is planned for 21<sup>st</sup> June this year.

*Deacon David Avery*

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

St Thomas of Canterbury Foundation was founded 58 years ago. Though tasks and activities have varied over the years the group has always been involved in the many aspects of parish life.

Being united in prayer at our meetings creates a unique bond whilst enriching our spiritual lives. Bi-monthly meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month in the Upper Room. Meetings proper begin at 1pm, but on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 12 noon, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered for the intentions of members.

Social occasions are built into our programme allowing us to enjoy each others company and friendships to develop. This year we have been both entertained and enlightened by a variety of speakers. Chris Bull's presented on Motherhood. From Deacon David we learned of the valuable work undertaken by those ordained to the Permanent Diaconate. Mary Reynolds informed us on the history and purpose of the vessels used during Mass and in May Barbara Markham will present on The Hidden Life of Mary. During the month of October members enjoyed an outing to The Wooden Spoon in Wye followed by afternoon tea at the Tickled Trout. At the time of writing plans are underway to attend the UCM Diocesan Pilgrimage to Aylesford on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> of May, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> June members will enjoy a Day of Reflection at the Convent of Mercy in Whitstable.

In June Rev Liz Hughes, chaplain to the Pilgrims Hospice will be the guest speaker at an Ecumenical Service to be held in our church. To this service we will welcome all other religious groups from Canterbury. The proceeds from this service will be donated to The Pilgrims Hospice. In this the year of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the UCM in the Archdiocese of Southwark we look forward to sharing our Faith and reaching out to members of other religious denominations.

Members continue to exercise their ministry of caring and at meetings there are regular updates on those members who are ill or housebound. Members are encouraged to maintain links with those members unable to attend meetings to let them know that they are still valued members of our confraternity and to keep them informed of forthcoming events. Special thanks are due to Canon Bunce, our spiritual advisor for his continued support.

Members of the UCM provides fellowship and membership is open to all Catholic women, married or single, also non-Catholic wives of Catholic husbands and may be extended to other women who are in sympathy with its aim and objectives. We believe that we can give YOU something. We know that YOU can contribute so much.

Do join us at our meetings, you will be most welcome.

*Mary McGeary*  
*President*

## **CHILDREN'S LITURGY**

Father Tom said, after presiding at a Children's Mass, 'It was fun, I can see why you do it!' 'Fun' is the highest of praise from that quarter, but surely fun is part of what Jesus meant when he said, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly'. We lose something if we do not hear the funny side of some of his stories, and do not allow ourselves to feel happy or sad or thoughtful when we hear the Gospel. And Heaven will be fun, so let's start enjoying life, and liturgy, now!

As well as the Masses in church, we have our weekly celebrations of the Word in the Upper Room. Many thanks to our dedicated leaders! Maurice Crosland and Yim Soon Gilmore have moved on from this ministry during the year, Maurice after 20 years' service, so a special thanks to him. And a warm welcome to Anne, Janice and Julia, and Niamh who have joined us. We could always use a few more hands, as we all lead busy lives – but we all have gifts to bring to the altar.

Perhaps the brightest gifts are brought by the children. Sometimes I find that you are teaching me about the Good News when we talk about the readings. So yes, Father Tom, I know why I do it!

We have also collaborated with St Thomas' School; the children's Seder meal was held there this Maundy Thursday, as it fell in term-time. Thank you to the parents who brought in children from the village schools. We had a visitor there, Francis from Kenya, who says he can see how to adapt this when he returns to his own parish from his studies at the Franciscan International Study Centre. But, he wondered, how would they afford the meat? St Thomas' School also organised the travelling crib during Advent, and made sure Mary and Joseph arrived safely at the stable.

This year some of the leaders attended a training day at Whitstable, and our new Child Protection Officer, Margaret Butchers, has been making sure we are following diocesan and national policies to keep our children safe. Thank you to Margaret for taking on a mountain of paperwork and helping us through our share of it.

*Maurice Billingsley*

## **THE PARISH SCHOOLS ST ANSELMS**

There has been a major change at St Anselm's during the last year with the departure of the head Mr Philip Wicker. The deputy Ms Fiona Quilty took over as acting head and was confirmed as permanent head after a selection process held at the beginning of the year.

There continues to be regular Masses every Friday morning as well as other Masses and liturgies during the course of the school year. I wrote last year about how impressed I have been with the talent and enthusiasm shown by so many of the pupils at these events and this continues to be the case.

On the feast of All Saints in November Bishop John commissioned four sixth formers and three members of staff to be extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion. This was a great example and witness to the rest of the school that their peers were prepared to undertake this important ministry for the school community.

Mrs Louise Perry has been confirmed as the permanent school chaplain and has moved to a new and much more suitable office. Louise does a tremendous job in providing pastoral care and support to pupils and staff as well as organising the clergy; no mean task!

There is a strong emphasis throughout the school of catholic values and encouragement to the living out of the Christian message.

I would like to thank the head of the RE department Mrs Gill Robinson and all the RE staff for their work and support of the clergy who come in to the school. As well as all those who work so hard to plan and prepare the music and other things that go into a successful liturgy.

Finally a word of thanks to my fellow priests for all they have done and continue to do at St Anselm's; Fr Ben Lodge, Fr James Sweeney, Fr Wilfred McGreal, Fr Peter Geldard, Fr Joe Feeley and Fr Jeff Cridland.

*Father Richard Hearn  
School Chaplain*

## **ST THOMAS' SCHOOL**

As part of its School Improvement Plan, St Thomas' has been seeking ways of promoting Spirituality and of extending the range of spiritual experiences for its pupils. Children prepare carefully for the masses that are held each term at the school; during the mass itself, they are invited to follow and read together the prayers and responses which are projected onto a big screen from a computer. This enhances their participation.

Links with the parish have been greatly developed this year thanks to the close cooperation of Mr McBride (head teacher) and Maurice Billingsley who have worked together on the planning of events like a Harvest Liturgy, an Advent Service in the church, in November and a Seder (Passover) meal held

in the school hall on Maundy Thursday. The members of the Parents, Teachers and Friends' Association always work hard to ensure the success of its fund raising events, especially the Summer Fete and the Christmas Fair which were very well attended by the children, their families and friends, including many parishioners. The money raised this year has been used to purchase some wonderful playground equipment (climbing wall, mini theatre stage etc...) as well as a wooden shelter and picnic tables for those hot summers' days!

Once again, the weeks leading up to Christmas were a very busy time for the school: the Infants performed some of the rehearsals, interviewed the children, their parents and a teacher about the true meaning of Christmas and, on a final visit, recorded the performance which was then broadcast on Christmas morning. The older children participated in an uplifting and prayerful Carol Service with readings, poems, drama and dancing; the church was packed! Families and friends were then invited to gather in the Hall for refreshments and mince pies. As is the custom now, the money collected at these events went to Fr Sylvester.

During 'Black History Month' (October), a Multicultural Week was held at the school: we all learned about the various countries some of St Thomas' pupils come from and celebrated (through drumming and story telling workshops) the diversity of languages and cultures these children represent.

In February, the Year 2 pupils from the eight Primary Schools in Canterbury were invited to a time of 'Collective Worship' at the Cathedral. Each school had been asked to prepare a short presentation on the theme of 'God's Creatures' : St Thomas' pupils presented an informative account and colourful posters about the life of St Francis of Assisi. A few days later, the Year 4 pupils performed in the Crypt a moving and astounding dramatisation of the life and death of St Thomas Becket.

The annual programme of church visits is underway: the pupils from each class benefit enormously from their time in church with Fr Richard; he readily answers all their questions and allows them to walk around the church and become more familiar with this sacred place.

Information about St Thomas' School, including ongoing news, events and projects, is now available on its new website at...

**[www.st-thomas-canterbury.kent.sch.uk](http://www.st-thomas-canterbury.kent.sch.uk)**

*Marie-Claire Renn*

### **SCRIPTURE GROUPS**

The Scripture Group is an amalgamation of a Lent House Group (which itself grew into a long term Scripture House Group) and C.A.F.E.

It is not a Prayer Group though we do pray at the beginning and end of each meeting. It is essentially Scripture based. We read the liturgy for the following Sunday, have a period of quiet reflection then go on to discuss what we have read. We endeavour to understand what is being said to us and how we should apply it to our lives. We try to discover what is required of us as practising Christians.

The programme begins with Thursday midday Mass followed by a picnic lunch (brought by ourselves). We supply tea, coffee and biscuits. This is a period of sharing prior to our reading and we feel that it has become an important part of our meeting. It has provided friendship and support for each member, all of whom have said how valuable they find this time.

There have also been one or two visitors joining our meetings occasionally. We would welcome anyone who feels they would like to join us either on a regular basis or from time to time. *Patty Baxter, Co-ordinator*

### **CHURCH CARERS**

This year has seen a great commitment by all our regular cleaners at St Thomas'. I am pleased to say that their dedication has not gone un-noticed, not only by our own parishioners, but by many visitors to the church who have commented on the cleanliness. This past year on several occasions I myself have had contact with tourists from various countries who have commented on this fact. May I also thank Martin for painting our working sacristy – it looks a lot brighter. I would also like to thank you all for the love and care you have for this church, long may it continue.

*Tina Hamilton  
Sacristan*

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

Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2007, visit to St Andrew's Church, Deal. This was our third visit to this lovely old church and we were given a warm welcome from the vicar, Fr Christopher Landler. We arrived in time for Mass and after lunch we listened to an address given by Canon Christopher Irvine of Canterbury Cathedral. As in past years, we then formed a procession through the town carrying a

statue of Our Lady and singing hymns. We were met on the promenade by members of the Deal Rowing Club and other members of the public and after a short service, the vicar blessed the sea, then he and Canon Irvine walked down the beach and threw a wreath of flowers into the waves. To round off the ceremonies, and as a royal salute to Our Lady Queen of Heaven, 3 rockets were fired over the sea and we all gasped as a shower of sparkling stars exploded above us.

Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007, visit to the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Wingham. Wingham is one of the finest villages in East Kent. A lady parishioner kindly escorted us around the church which was built in 1286 to replace a small Norman building erected about 1070. The new church was of cathedral proportions for suddenly, Wingham was on the map. Because of its geographical position, halfway between the busy mediaeval port of Sandwich and the cathedral city of Canterbury, English Kings and other VIPs chose to break their journey and rest the night at the Manor House. During the troubled times of the Reformation, the church suffered neither desecration or damage. The Catholic population of Wingham has steadily grown and in the seventies the vicar of Wingham agreed to a Catholic Mass being said each Sunday for his Catholic parishioners, thus bringing the Mass back to yet another pre-Reformation church.

Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2007, talk on the Archives of Canterbury Cathedral by Mr Mark Bateson, Senior Archivist. The actual site of the Cathedral archives are tucked away just behind the Great Cloister which was originally the Monastic Dormitory of the monks before the Reformation. The archives also include the Library which is in another building further down the path and alongside the Cathedral. In 1942 a bomb fell on this building and completely destroyed it. It was rebuilt in 1954. There are 10 people employed on the staff of the Cathedral Archives but who are actually paid by Kent County Council because much of their work is connected with public and civil records. The archives of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury are particularly rich for the mediaeval period. Mark passed round a copy of one of the oldest manuscripts in the archives which dated back to 1072 and confirmed the supremacy of Canterbury over York.

Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007, talk on the Importance of Ecumenism in today's world by Mr David Heap. David explained that the word ecumenism comes from the Greek 'oikoumene', the inhabited world. Today, ecumenism means initiatives aimed at greater religious unity or co-operation. The most common is co-operation between Christian denominations. Ecumenism can be both narrow and broad. The Catholic view is rather narrow and its goal is to have one single visible organization, i.e. union with the Roman Catholic Church. Protestants interpret things differently and view ecumenism in a single spiritual way. Going back into history, David touched upon the Great Schism of 1054 when the Roman Catholic Church separated from the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007, talk on Women in the Early Church by Fr Tony Cassidy. Fr Tony launched out on his latest theme about the women in the early Church, the most important of whom was Mary, the mother of Jesus. The fact that women were not always mentioned as being present at important moments in Our Lord's life does not mean that they were not there. In some cases, such as at Pentecost, Our Lady was definitely mentioned as being present when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. The same can be said about the Crucifixion of Our Lord. It is important to recognise Jesus' family in a theological sense rather than biological which meant that all His followers were therefore related and would have been present at family gatherings such as at Passover and the Last Supper.

Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007, Meditation on Isaiah's prediction of the birth of Jesus by Miss Barbara Markham. Barbara spoke about the origins and role of prophets in general and explained their specific role in the Old Testament. Isaiah is considered the greatest of the major prophets perhaps because of the sheer volume of his writings. As this meeting was a meditation rather than a talk, Barbara used the medium of music to illustrate each actual prophecy using Handel's Messiah which is Isaiah transcribed into a musical format. She also included some Latin plainchant and Hebrew hymns, which made a pleasing contrast.

Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008, talk on Crusading for Mary by Mr David Heap. David gave us a very interesting talk about Crusades in general and the Crusade of Mary in particular. Historically, Crusaders were armed pilgrims and the crusades of the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century consisted of soldiers who had taken a vow to save Jerusalem from the Saracens. The effects of these crusades were questionable. The current meanings of a crusade are rhetorical and metaphorical, i.e. to identify as righteous any war that is given religious or moral justification. Today, ardent activists refer to their cause as a crusade. David then departed from history and passes on to the Crusade of Mary Immaculate which was founded in 1917 by St Maximilian Kolbe. He is honoured as a 20<sup>th</sup> century martyr who was condemned by the Nazis to die of starvation at Auschwitz.

*Barbara Markham.  
Treasurers ESBVM*

## KENT COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS & JEWS

*No Report Received*

### ALTAR SERVERS

We have a small but dedicated team of servers that has had some additions during the last year. New albs have been ordered and should arrive shortly. They will be to a different design and be worn with a red cord symbolising the martyrdom of St Thomas of Canterbury.

On behalf of all the priests I would like to thank the servers for all that they do. We always need more servers, anyone male or female can serve as long as they have received their First Holy Communion. There is no upper age limit!

*Father Richard Hearn*

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

The St Thomas' Conference continues to serve the Parish community and beyond – supporting twinned SVP Conferences in India and this year the Sudan appeal as well. We visit clients regularly and also help those who find themselves in financial need or other difficulties. The beginning of 2007 saw our President step down due to unforeseen circumstances and the position still remains vacant although we manage well with three long-term members of the Conference rotating the chair between them, thus spreading the workload. Our membership is reasonably healthy at present with little change this year in numbers, however, it is with sadness that we report that several of our elderly clients have died during the course of the year. As a result we find ourselves trying to reach out to others who could benefit from our help either by regular or occasional visits. The weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> / 21<sup>st</sup> September, is dedicated to the St Vincent De Paul and we plan to use this opportunity to do just that.

Our summer outing last year took us to Minster Abbey – we were fortunate enough to have a fine day. Going first through Whitstable, slight mist prevented a clear view of the wind farm out at sea. We then went onto the Abbey, where some of us were privileged to witness the nuns' devotions in the beautiful chapel before it was time for our Mass. After a leisurely lunch we returned to the coach for a tour of the coast, via St Augustine's Cross, noting the very different castles at Deal and Dover. Ice creams all round concluded the trip. We would like to record our thanks to drivers from the Parish, who kindly collected and returned many of our guests to their homes.

The Christmas party was a joyous occasion and was well attended. We were very grateful to Mr McBride and Mrs Dean for organising a group of St Thomas' children to sing some carols for us and to give up their Sunday afternoon at such a busy time. We also owe our thanks to Audrey Matthews who agreed at quite short notice to play the accordion.

In between these two events alongside our visits we also help those referred to us by Social Services and other caring agencies. We have been able to buy such things as school uniforms, cookers and bunk beds.

One member of the Conference continues to visit the homeless centre once a week and takes fresh fruit and vegetables to them. He is a very welcome visitor there and his commitment is much appreciated by them. Another member is committed to keeping up communication links with our twinned Conferences in India-this is quite a task as letters can take weeks to get through.

All of this work is only made possible by the very generous support we get from the Parish through the monthly Door Collections, an average of between £300.00 and £450.00, each month. Our thanks go to the many people who support our work in this and in other ways.

*Colette Noble,  
Secretary*

### 100 CLUB

We had a full quota of members this year, so that we were able to have the full 25 draws of £20.00, plus there will be 4 lucky winners of £250 at the A.G.M.

The 100 Club raises £1,000 every year for the parish and it only costs £25.00 per year with nothing else to do except collect your winnings.

Unfortunately, we have lost several members this year due to different reasons, so please think about joining/rejoining and raising money for the parish. Look for the membership form in the newsletter, fill it in and return it to Brenda at the presbytery.

Thank you to Brenda for the everyday running of the 100 Club and good luck to all our members.

*Ron Arcari*

### **THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

At the beginning of this year I was appointed Child Protection Representative for the Parish. The main responsibilities for this role include raising awareness of the issues of child protection, acting as a recognised contact point for anyone needing to report concerns about the protection of children and vulnerable people and referring such concerns to the appropriate agency, assisting the Canon in monitoring the work of new volunteers, and ensuring that the Diocesan recruitment process takes place. In these responsibilities, I am guided by both the Canon and Mrs Helen Sheppard, the Diocesan Child Protection Officer.

Parish recruitment procedures now require that all new volunteers are given role descriptions, complete application forms and CRB disclosure, have references taken up, and be interviewed, before taking on a role in a parish. All existing volunteers are to have a retrospective recruitment process applied.

In our parish, we are fortunate to have many volunteers. I think I have contacted everyone who should complete CRB disclosure, and I would like to thank so many of you who completed the forms very promptly. If you think you should have been checked, and I have missed you, then please let me know. The roles I have checked so far are employees, music group leaders, extraordinary ministers of Communion, children's liturgy teachers and SVP members.

A new national initiative is being introduced later this year-the ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority). I will be attending training for this in June, hosted by Archbishop Kevin McDonald. I don't yet know the full implications of this for our parish, but the groundwork already done through the forms and CRB process should mean that we are well prepared for this initiative.

*Margaret Butchers*

### **16<sup>th</sup> CANTERBURY (St Thomas) SCOUT GROUP**

2007 was the Centenary year of Scouting with a number of special events to celebrate this achievement. Within our own Group, we planned our own special activities as we felt that participating in the larger organised events, whilst being good for mixing with other Groups, did tend to mean that our own members would not necessarily maximise the activities to the full. As a result, we arranged for the Beavers to have a full day out at Wildwood, the Cubs with a very special trip to London spending the night on board HMS Belfast, and the Scouts/Explorers visiting Thorpe Park and then having a special night at Ross Wood. There was also a District fun day at Ross Wood.

Our Group remains firmly established as one of the most active and largest Groups in the District. We have retained most of our adult Leaders but are always on the lookout for anyone who might be prepared to help in any of the Sections.

The spring is the start of the camping season and we all partook of a Group Centenary Camp in May. It all started off well but the weather turned nasty and made it a very wet weekend with the Scouts staying into the worst period. Overall it was a very successful weekend with the Beavers having a one-night sleepover in the hall and a packed programme of activities in the form of a series of bases which everyone took part in during the day.

In June, we all attended a District Fun Day weekend at Ross Wood where the Cubs and Beavers had a full day of activities, games, a visit to an early settlement, cooking on an open fire of crafts, adventure activities, games, a visit to an early settlement, cooking on an open fire and many more. So many things to do that might not usually be available at home or in school. The Scouts and Explorers went on the next day with some similar activities but generally a bit more adventurous included an orienteering trail, prussicking (climbing up a rope using just a pair of rope slings), mild crate building and a tug o war to name but a few. A thoroughly excellent weekend for all those who participated.

Annual camps take place at the start of the summer holidays. The Cub's camp was based on a 'Pirate' theme. Each six had a Leader based on a character from Treasure Island and a ship's name from the time of the pirates off the southern American coast. The Cubs made flags, scarves and goggles, and took part in a balloon sword mock fight together with a whole series of activities ranging from firing a canon, building a small catapult, to a treasure hunt where gold was to be found in a pirate chest, (chocolate coins actually!). One of the best parts of the camp is always fire lighting and cooking sausages, toasted buns and making a rock cake. This was followed by a traditional campfire before the stay was over. The camp was blessed with good weather, which is always a lovely bonus!

The Scouts and Explorers followed for a full week with plenty of planned adventurous activities, which gave them an enjoyable and challenging week. With a trip to France, a patrol cooking

competition, sailing at Dover and a Mexican evening, there was plenty both to do and to keep everyone fully occupied and interested. The cooking competition requires the patrol to devise a suitable menu, go shopping with a limited budget, prepare a full three-course meal and serve it attractively. The District Commissioner, Paul, came to judge and sample the individual patrol offerings and the overall standard was extremely high. Sailing at Dover was adversely affected by the weather with, for once, too much wind for the young people to sail independently. Most, however, were taken for a sail by the instructors so did manage to experience a very breezy sail.

In the autumn, the Group organised the special events to celebrate the Centenary year. The Scouts went to Thorpe Park and had a survival night at Ross Wood including a 'hog roast' and an opportunity to partake in a karaoke sing along before sleeping out under the stars. Sleeping out involved the use of 'survival' bags and everyone had a go although how many actually slept throughout the night is anyone's guess! The Cubs travelled to London to stay on board HMS Belfast overnight. After breakfast, they had a very knowledgeable talk about the ship and the living conditions when the ship was involved in the Russian convoys during the Second World War. There was then time to explore the ship from the Captains Bridge right down to the Boiler Room with its enormous engines (27 tons of fuel used a minute at full speed!). An added bonus included seeing Tower Bridge open up for a sailing barge. The Cubs then went down river to Greenwich by boat having lunch in Greenwich Park and returning to central London for a trip on the London Eye travelling into the dusk with all of London lit up and looking magnificent. What an incredible experience!

The end of the year is also the time for some of the District events with a few of our youngsters entering the BMX competition and another group of Cubs, Scouts and Explorers competing in the annual fun swimming gala and regaining the trophy.

The Christmas period started with the Advent Church Parade (one of two yearly parades with the other in March). Christmas is a busy time with the Scout Post, our own Group entertainment, a trip to the Marlowe for the panto, our own party night, bag packing at Asda and the Scouts skiing trip to Chatham. The Group entertainment evening completed the Centenary theme with a series of campfire songs and a special contribution for the end of the Scouting Association's Centenary Year.

We are always very much appreciative of the support given by the Church which enables us to safely store equipment and provide an excellent base for Scouting activities. This year see the last occasion for the Christmas post as we cannot manage to continue this activity in the future. The support of the Church and especially the parishioners has been greatly appreciated over the years.

Scouting needs good Leaders to maintain the original ideals of our founder, Baden-Powell and to provide the challenge for all our young people. Scouting provides the opportunity to partake in open-air activities with a strong emphasis on teamwork and mixing to provide that base for the well-rounded development of our youngsters. If nothing else, Scouting provides the opportunity to learn to exist in a camp situation without the virtues of electricity or money – the two things young people can't usually seem to do without!

*Alan J. Ross – Group Scout Leader*

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

During the past year the ward composed of the two which amalgamated (reported last year) gets visited as often as possible. However, the patients are admitted for a limited period only before being transferred to hospital in other areas (Thanet, Ashford, Medway), for appropriate treatment/therapy. Because of the quicker transfers this means that contacts may be sometimes missed. There are two wards for patients aged 18-65, in the newer parts of the hospital.

There is a rehabilitation ward in the old building for patients aged 18-65. These people stay for some time so there are no problems in visiting, although for rehabilitation purposes they may often be out.

Many elderly patients (in the old building) have been, during the past year, discharged to after-care homes. The wards in St Martin's hospital have been re-arranged and upgraded so that all the patients are now in downstairs wards with much brighter and pleasanter surroundings, bedrooms for 1-4 people, (not dormitories) and views to gardens. There are three wards for patients over 65.

Our Holy Communion Service is now not always such, in which case we have a Prayer Service. At the time of our last report we seemed to have a small but fairly steady number of R.C. patients and one or two were fairly regular attenders and others would come if they could. Non R.C. people would also attend fairly regularly. Since then it seems that St Martin's holds few, if any, R.C. patients. Attendances from non R.C. people have also dropped. The ward staff are very supportive of this Ministry and when possible send staff to accompany patients. Unfortunately there are not always sufficient staff.

The Laws dealing with Patient Confidentiality mean that we are not allowed to ask patients about their religious faith. So, if they or their families have not asked for this to be noted on admission, then nobody knows.

Sometimes nobody comes to our Prayer Service, in this case we (usually myself, Rev Peter Richmond, the lead chaplain, and Robert, a volunteer on the chaplaincy team), hold a short service including prayers for the needs of St Martin's and to ensure that the presence of God is maintained in the hospital.

For sometime Peter has recognised that fewer people attend services in the chapel, so he and Robert have been holding short services on the wards, including varied types of music. These are well received by many patients and staff, and do not seem to annoy any who are not interested. This seems to be a satisfactory means of meeting people and is not to the detriment of talking one to one with any individual person. Watch this space.

Thanks are due to Peter and Robert for their help and prayers which are much appreciated. And many thanks to Father Richard Hearn for his time, support and prayers and for his visiting of patients.

*Jean Johnson*

*Chaplaincy Team Member, St Martin's Hospital*

### **MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON MONDAY 14<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

Mass was celebrated at 7pm. This was the Opening Prayer of the meeting.

**Present:** Chris Bull (Chairman), Canon Michael Bunce, Father Richard Hearn, Deacon David Avery, members of the Parish Pastoral Council and parishioners.

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Fr George Marsden, Fr Richard Bateman, Jean Johnson, Roy Shersby, Tom Hill, Barbara Markham, Judith Roser and Mike and Aldwyth Garside.
2. **To receive any other business.** Tony O'Sullivan to speak on Traidcraft. Jean Johnson (a letter). Barbara Markham (a letter). Office of Chairman, a 3-year term.
3. **Minutes of the AGM held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2006.** Two items had been omitted from the Minutes: The Finance Committee's Report (a deficit of £12,050, an increase in the weekly collections and an anticipated surplus of £6,000 next year), and the Parish Priest's Report (refurbishment and reopening of St Thomas' Shop, the new reconciliation room, Bishop John Hines visit on 23<sup>rd</sup> July). Bearing in mind the omissions, the rest of the Minutes were accepted as a true report. Proposer: David Heap. Seconder: Ray Hunter.
4. **Matters Arising.** The Chairman emphasised how satisfactory and well received the talks were by Fr Tom Herbst. Chris Smith proposed that the Annual Parish Report should be accepted in its entirety before the A.G.M.
5. **The Chairman's Report.** Chris wished to make one correction and one addition to his full report. The date of the meeting with Bishop John Hine in Ashford to collate the parish reports on 'Towards a Vision of the Diocese' will be on Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> June. Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, is the Feast of the Translation of St Thomas of Canterbury and there will be sung Mass celebrated in the Cathedral at 8pm.
6. **Finance Committee's Report.** Tim Levey spoke briefly, referring us to the financial statements on the back pages of the annual report, hoping that everybody understands them. The finances are in a better condition and he has confidence in the future.
7. **Parish Priest's Report.** Canon Bunce thanked the Finance Committee for all their work. He drew attention to the new brighter lighting in the sanctuary – a test for further lighting using diffusers, which may need adjusting. Perhaps only two more lights will be needed, though Tina Hamilton thought the rest of the church and side altars could be better lit. The scaffolding on the outside of the church is all up and will be there for 8 weeks for the treatment of the stone, a mixture of ragstone and sandstone, which tends to crumble. Canon thanked Tony Cassidy for his management of St Thomas' Shop, which has now been brought up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, having, amongst other things, a card machine. He reminded us of the Deanery Day in Aylesford on 15<sup>th</sup> September, when we will have the opportunity to meet parishioners from other parts of the Deanery. He also referred to the excellent talks by Fr Tom Herbst. A parishioner, Barbara Markham, wondered if they had to be in the evening and suggested they could be recorded for the benefit of those unable to attend. Canon referred to the summer supply priests, Fr Sylvester, coming in June and Fr Williams Abba, who will be here from July. Money has been raised in the parish for Fr Sylvester's school: £3000 by Frances Gerth and £300 from an organ recital and £412 from St Thomas' School. Canon welcomed Fr Richard Hearn to the parish, a great asset. He told us of his hobbies, collecting medals, being a railway enthusiast and having a model railway. Fr

Bateman is very ill, but battles on, now taking just painkillers. Canon spoke highly of his fellow clergy- Fr George, Deacon David and staff in the Presbytery: Brenda, patient, helpful and efficient, Wendy, housekeeper and cook and John Spillett, now 73, who also boosts the parish income through hall bookings for market research. In fact the focus in Canterbury has now been established at this end of the town. The Mass attendances are going up, due to foreign migrants: Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians, Ukrainians, Asians, people from Kerela. The dilemma is: should these have Mass in their own rite? We conclude that this is a wonderful parish. The Chairman thanked Canon Bunce.

8. **Any Other Business.** Tony O'Sullivan circulated and explained the 2006-07 report and financial statement of St Thomas' Traidcraft, saying that, although they broke even, it had been a disappointing year. Traidcraft now had outlets in the supermarkets and other shops. However, every year he is able to send a profit of 5% or 10% to Cafod. Last year he sent £800 for work in Bolivia. This year he proposed sending £200 to Cafod. He urged us all to come along to the Traidcraft stall on the first weekend of every month. He thanked Canon Bunce, Brenda, John, and Phil Stirton and Pat, who man the stall after the 8am Mass. Fair Trade is a good project and deserves to continue. Jean Johnson sent a letter inquiring if anyone could provide music for the service of Holy Communion at St Martin's Hospital on Wednesdays at 2.30pm. The service lasts about half an hour. A keyboard and an organ are available. Contact Jean or Fr Richard Hearn. A letter from Barbara Markham was read out, in which, as reported above, she regrets that older people are unable to attend evening talks and meetings owing to distance from the Church, darkness and age, and she suggests that talks could be recorded and those who have missed out could enjoy them later. This suggestion was welcomed. Chris Bull had been informed that the Chairman of the PPC was usually elected for a 3 year term of office. Being previously unaware of this and now having completed his fifth year, he proposed standing down after six years, if this was agreed and he asked if he could have a vote of confidence for another year.
9. **Draw for the 100 Club.** First a cheque for £1000 was presented to Canon Bunce for the Parish. Then four winners received £250.00 each. The winning numbers were: 13 Patrick Pullicino, 30 Steve Hyland, 95 Mike Pocock, 88 Mary Hyland.
10. **The Closing Prayer.** The Hail Holy Queen was led by Fr Richard Hearn.
11. The meeting adjourned for refreshments and socializing.

#### **Agenda for the A.G.M. on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

1. Opening Prayer (Mass at 7.00 p.m.)
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the AGM held in May 2006.
4. Matters Arising (not appearing on the Agenda)
5. Chairman's Report
6. Finance Committee's Report
7. 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 Other Business you wish to have tabled, then please let Canon Bunce have it a day or two before the meeting.*