

BISHOP'S VISITATION  
TO THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST MARIE, SHEFFIELD  
SUNDAY, 19 JUNE 2016

**DIVERSITY** – St Marie's is an incredible welcoming, diverse and multicultural parish. This diversity extends to the multinational parish priests we've had in the last few years. This makes a unique and absolutely enriching, motivating and inspirational community.

**EVENTS** – It is also a dynamic and vibrant church with a growing number of events providing spiritual and cultural enrichment for everybody – we've seen a record number of events taking place in the last couple of years since the restoration of the Cathedral – bringing in Catholics and non-Catholics alike into our place of worship.

**FR CHRIS** – We should note that during recent times Fr Chris has been on his own and without considering the presence of the Holy Spirit we could think that he is some kind of a magician. There are other three parishes served from St Marie's: Holy Family, Arbourthorne; St Charles Borromeo, Attercliffe; Our Lady Queen of Heaven & St Oswald, Wybourn. Altogether 20+ Masses/week. We thank Fr Chris for all his extraordinary hard work and the Lord's strength given to him to serve such a large parish effectively.

**YEAR OF MERCY** – A pilgrimage booklet was prepared and is now in its third printing run totalling approx. 1000 copies. The Holy Door is suitably decorated with archway and banners both on the railings and inside the entrance. Pilgrims are invited to make their pilgrimage to various sites around the Cathedral as mentioned in the booklet. Pilgrims can leave a token of their visit in the Lady Chapel, e.g. a petal placed on the Altar, in the Mortuary Chapel, or a stone held and made personal which is then left on the Altar. There is a Pilgrimage Wall, where pilgrims can place a gold or silver tag with their name on, and finally a personal blessing with Holy Water from the vessel in front of the font. The Lady Chapel Altar is covered, as is the Mortuary Chapel Altar, and the Pilgrimage Wall has approx. 900 tags. Pilgrims can be seen in various parts of the church with their booklet. Several Catholic schools have either been on pilgrimage or are coming. The two pilgrimage guides have devised a pilgrimage suitable for children and for sometimes large numbers. 100 pilgrims are expected from All Saints School next week! Two primary schools are coming in the autumn, from Sheffield and Dearne Valley (6 classes with 30 in each class).

**HERITAGE TOURS** – There are 3 guides who do regular tours on Sundays and Wednesdays for adults. 2 guides do school tours which are very popular with children from Sheffield (five schools), Rotherham, Chesterfield, Worksop and Barlborough. The tours are marketed through the Heritage Lottery Co-ordinator as **A Day at the Cathedral** and include, an hour's tour, an organ demonstration, which is very popular, with scary music and an opportunity to play the organ, followed by lunch and time in the Hall. Fr Pratt, the founder of St Marie's is a popular topic as are vestments and items used for Mass. The feedback sofar has been excellent!

**CONCERTS** – The Cathedral has also been home to a wonderful range of concerts with leading musicians coming to perform from across the world. This has included a sell-out concert from The King's Singers. Silviu Cobeanu has been involved in organising much of this and the events have been a great opportunity to welcome people of different faiths and no faith to enter and experience St Marie's Cathedral, not only as a place of worship but as a place of community. Silviu Cobeanu is also the Cantor and the Soloist singing at the Vigil Mass on Saturdays.

**STEWARDS** – A team of stewards ensure the smooth running of big events, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Chrism Mass etc. A similar team ensure the smooth running of the Concerts, one of which is the Choir of King's College, Cambridge on Monday, 27 June.

**CORPUS CHRISTI** – The Cathedral Parish organises an increasingly established and growing Corpus Christi procession through Sheffield City Centre. This is not only a wonderful moment of witness but now also has an ecumenical element, sharing our last station with the Church of England at Sheffield Cathedral. This event continues to be a great success, including participation from different Church rites over the years including the Eritrean Orthodox and the Syro-Malankara Rites.

**ALTAR SERVING** – Since the Bishop's last visitation, we were sad to lose our long serving lead Altar Server Jim Lee. This left a gap in leadership. We are fortunate to have Paul Helliwell who has stepped up to lead the altar serving at 1030 am Mass. Leandro Martins now leads as MC at Cathedral Parish occasions such as the Easter Triduum and together with Paul will be working on new recruits and training to build the altar serving at St Marie's.

**SVP** – Asked to be re-established at the past Bishop's Visitation, the District of Sheffield supported us in establishing what is now an often unsung but hard working and valuable part of behind the scenes' parish life.

**FLOWER/DECORATION TEAM** – Responsible for weekly flowers to enhance the Cathedral and the Porch. The Decoration Team is responsible for the Crib and other decorations at Christmas. Easter flowers, Paschal candle and crosses on the gates, and other decorations, such as the Holy Door, as required.

**CATERING TEAM** – A team of volunteers provide refreshments as required, e.g. the Friday Lunch Club after 12.45 pm Mass in the Parish Room and Sunday Teas & Coffees after 10.30 am Mass in Houlden Hall.

**NIGHTFEVER** – Over the past two years NightFever has become a very well-established evening of evangelisation run twice a year typically and organised by the young people of the Parish. It has been successful in welcoming hundreds of local people into the Parish for a very special experience they would not expect to have on their night out or visit to Sheffield City Centre.

**SAFEGUARDING** – Paul Helliwell is now the Parish Safeguarding Representative and ensures that all parishioners working with children or the vulnerable have the appropriate checks as required by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Paul has also been busy updating our Parish DBS records.

**50 DAYS OF EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT** – The Parish was fortunate and able to welcome Jesus Youth UK to the Parish and into the Cathedral House during Lent to run 50 days and nights of 24 hr adoration. This was a great success and wonderful to have the Cathedral continuously open and have the presence of the Lord exposed in this way for the duration of Lent.

**LENTEN TALKS** – For the past 2 years we have held Lenten talks in Holy Week to aide the preparation of Parishioners during this most Holy Week. This was initiated by the PPC with Parishioners feeding ideas into the topics of the talks. The Bishop and other priests of the Diocese have assisted in holding these reflections and this has also been a great success.

**GENEROSITY AND CHARITY FUNDRAISING** – St Marie's has a generous community that supports second collections every other week – and very often up to three second collections in a row of weeks. Fundraising events have also happened to support international charities. A new charity is chosen to be supported, nominated by parishioners and evaluated by the PPC each year. Thousands of pounds have been raised by Parishioners to support numerous charities in Africa, Asia and South America.

**READERS** – The Cathedral has been able to maintain a group of more than 20 Readers. The reading is organised through the incessant efforts of Bob Rae and Sile Burns who have been putting together the Rotas of Readers for the whole year over many years now. Bob Rae is also organising the training for the Readers helped by other experienced Readers as and when required.

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE HOLY COMMUNION** – commonly known as “Eucharist Ministers”. After a slight drop in numbers for a short period of time the Cathedral has been able to recruit new Eucharist Ministers to cover this very important Ministry.

**MUSIC** – The Cathedral is privileged to have 2 choirs singing every Sunday. The Choir singing at 10.30 am Mass and the Music Group singing at 6.30 pm Mass. After the Re-ordering of the Cathedral the Parish had to relinquish the post of Director of Music. Since then Hugh Finnigan with the Choir and Jenie Lismore with the Music Group have worked at great expense of their unpaid time to maintain and grow the standard of Music at the Cathedral, e.g. Hugh Finnigan has written a new Mass, the Festival Mass, which is currently in the process of being approved by the relevant church bodies, and has a strong focus on including the Congregation in the singing of key parts of the Mass. Both the Choir and the Music Group comprise many talented and dedicated singers and musicians who seek to enhance the musical worship at the Sunday Masses every Sunday of the year. They lead the musical worship in singing and playing a wide range of music and songs. In particular, the Music Group has had the fortune to attract instrumentalists like Caroline McCalman, a cellist, Josiah Wang, a pianist who has helped when Jenie Lismore was not available, Jo-Ann Pereira, a guitarist and Alto, who have also been part of the Music at NightFever.

**PRAAYER GROUPS** – Every Friday and Saturday Parishioners congregate under the guidance of Phyllis Caesar, Tricia Hall and Joseph Durham to pray the Rosary. On Friday the Divine Mercy Chaplet & Prayers are said directly after the Rosary. This has in recent years become a part of St Marie's lay led prayer apostolate. The session on Saturday always begins with the Angelus/Regina Caeli. The Rosary is offered for the sick, the clergy and religious and for the Pope's Intentions during the Year of Mercy. Different members of the group are encouraged to lead a decade, read the meditations or lead the Litany. Many members of the Congregation at the 12.30 pm Mass participate in the Litany. The group has also established links with St Matthew's

(CoE) regarding their Friday Rosary. This is another fine example how the contributions of Parishioners turn the Cathedral into a truly spiritual place.

**JOURNEY IN FAITH** – Each year a number of adults go through the Journey in Faith programme and are baptised or received into the Church at Easter. Many things are done well with this programme, e.g. people are given a solid catechesis, the various Rites are celebrated well, the group usually gels and builds trust. However, there are potential areas of improvement: notably (1) to introduce more opportunities for participation by attendees into what has been primarily a lecture format, (2) to include a devotional as well as informational aspect in each session, and (3) to involve more people from the Parish. These are needed in order to help with providing refreshments, to befriend participants, and to act as sponsors where necessary. There is some concern that it can be difficult for people to make the transition from the Journey in Faith group into the wider congregation after Easter. In this respect Audrey Lorion has provided a valuable link for younger participants with the Young Adults Group.

**YOUNG ADULTS GROUP** – The Young Adults Group led by Charlie Currier meets regularly every week on a Wednesday and organises Adorations, study groups on the Pope’s Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel), the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church, and encounters with representatives from religious orders, e.g. a Franciscan Sister of the Renewal to talk about Franciscan life. Their regular meetings conclude with a social in a local pub.

**CHILDREN’S LITURGY** – In recent years, Candida Calvert has put together a large collection of materials for Children’s Liturgy. A workshop on the topic of Children’s Liturgy organised by the Liturgy and Spirituality Group of the Sheffield North Deanery was one of the best attended events for the LSG with participants from well beyond the North Deanery. Under her guidance the number of children participating in Children’s Liturgy has grown significantly and there is a hope that one day there will be a possibility to do a Mass at the Cathedral where the children are taking centre stage of the Celebration.

**FIRST COMMUNION** – This year 14 children started with the First Communion Programme which consisted of 14 sessions: 11 focussing on the theological aspects relating to the First Communion, 2 relating to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and 1 day practice of the Communion. The sessions are very practical and craft-oriented and the materials are adapted for young children.

All of the materials (papers, wool, glue, staples, string, paint & markers, PowerPoint slides) are prepared by Patricia Vergani according to the subject of the session. The sessions themselves are led by Yvonne O'Donovan.

**SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION** – 16 children and 4 adults received the Sacrament of Confirmation at a special Mass on 20th May, after 12 preparation sessions and a Retreat. The young people helped to prepare the liturgy and choose the music, and it was a moving and happy occasion. Catechists this year were Fionnuala Frances, Josie Grant, Shaye Frances, and Rosimar Vertuani. New members to the Confirmation Catechetics Team and expressions of interest will be invited in the near future for commencement of the new classes in November.

**FINAL THANK YOUS** – To Eileen Maher who has been and is involved with the Flower/Decoration Team, the Tour Guides, the Stewards and the Readers. She has excelled in finding new volunteers and was instrumental in keeping all these areas going. And a final thank you to Jean Rodgers who has served the Cathedral for 18 years as volunteer of the Flower Team and had to retire recently due to ill health.

This report is an extended version of the original report given to Bishop Ralph on the occasion of his Visitation to the Cathedral on Sunday, 19 June 2016 and is enhanced by statements made at the meeting with the Bishop and additional statements by volunteers involved in the Cathedral.

If you feel we have missed something on this report we would love to hear from you. Please email us here: [ppc@stmariecathedral.org](mailto:ppc@stmariecathedral.org) or write to us care of Cathedral House.

The Parish Pastoral Council of the  
Cathedral Church of St Marie, Sheffield

27 June 2016