

## Priest's Report 2019/20

Looking back at 2019 as a whole I am aware of the feeling of a great deal going on! This was the year in which our wonderful Mission Team launched itself after many, many, meetings and workshops and prayers. So, I want to mention the incredible work done by the Mission Team and its satellite groups – Outreach, Children Youth and Families, Communications, Prayer and Liturgy, and Social. The fruit of working together, and collaboratively, which isn't quite the same thing, began to bear fruit – and this continues. The highlight of the year for many people was the wonderful Mass and picnic we had up at the Wintershall Barn in September. The setting was fantastic – thank you Peter and Anne, the music fabulous – thank you to all the musicians, the celebration was uplifting and joyful and inclusive and it felt like such a good way to be together and celebrate all that it means to be catholic, a parish, and a community that is on the move. Picnic and organisation also beyond good.

The year was characterised, I would say, by a fresh understanding reached through my homilies in part, through the written word, through the Mission Assemblies and small group meetings, of the need to be a community looking outward, accepting the need, however unwelcome sometimes, for change and evolution and looking to the future with hope.

In this we are caught up in the Bishop's own agenda for renewal in the Diocese in the three areas of PRAYER, FORMATION and MISSION. In this we are reminded that we are first, and foremost a community that prays and worships together. It is this that gives us as 'Church' shape, purpose, meaning and character. Any other place to start, however seemingly good and worthy, is a false beginning. We exist to praise and thank God for all that He has done for us in the dying and rising of His Son.

To be better pray-ers, and offer-ers of praise, we need to be formed in the tradition – i.e. 'what is handed on' as worthy and valuable to each generation, and in a growth in two areas of our collective personality – in our understanding of our faith - the nuts and bolts of it we could say; and in a personal relationship with the Living God. Faith is content, we might say, but it is also primarily, perhaps, relationship. Prayer and study will form us in both of those areas and help our faith to deepen and grow. Then, and really, only then, are we fit and ready to evangelise. We will have something to say and show.

The first areas to evangelise are to a large extent those who already have the rudiments of faith but have stopped being part of the community of faith. This is, in reality a huge number of people and they present a completely different range of possibilities (and difficulties) to the ever-increasing number of people who are completely unchurched and un-evangelised. We need to develop ways of making our faith known and available to them. This is not going to be quick, or easy, and we should make it one of our priorities as a community of faith to ask for perseverance in this task.

If last year was the launch of the Mission Team, then this year is the beginning of some of that work bearing fruit. I would like to personally thank Chris Houston for taking up the leadership with me of the Team as a whole and for doing it with humility and great care. Also those individuals who have been a part of the long slog to define what we mean – Christina Wylie, Jane Harding, Lucy Hall, Trevor, and....

If it seems as though it's all about the Mission Team – well, it isn't but it is all about Mission! Part of that task is also the stuff we do all the time but which we only become aware of as and when we access a particular need or area. So, Children's Liturgy at both churches do a wonderful job – I would like to see that broaden out in terms of its leadership to take the strain off the 'few' a bit. Then, there has been Lucy and Katherine ably supported by Tracy in the office who have initiated a new and exciting FHC course and way of doing things designed to help parents to teach their children and grow in faith themselves. That is progressing well and we look forward to the 'great day' soon although some parents find the teaching of their faith a challenge.

Patrick and Emma have been looking after the seven or so confirmandii and providing an interesting and engaging period of formation for them. I have attended some of those sessions and been highly impressed by the quality of the teaching. Thanks you.

I have been involved, with Jane H, in preparing five adults for reception into the church at Easter. This is always a rewarding experience and I hope that those five individuals will be given a good start in leading a disciple's life after their reception. Ontop of that is baptisms, weddings and funerals – all rather few last year to be honest.

If prayer and praise are the lifeblood of our community then music must be high on the agenda and we are so fortunate to have Marilyn at STM leading the choir after Maggie Larkins retirement. Maggie was rewarded for her many years of dedication and service by being awarded a Bene Merenti medal by His Holiness Pope Francis last September. And Marilyn has taken up the baton and, furthermore, provided great encouragement to our merry band of young organists. Their enthusiasm and abilities are infectious and it is our hope that others of their age will be enthused and inspired too.

At Cranleigh we continue to have difficulty having a regular musical input which, if I'm honest, is really squashing the liturgy. We need to remedy this situation this year. In the meantime, I am grateful for Martin Evans careful guidance of his young people. We need this to continue and grow if we are to see our attendance increase at Cranleigh.

We have also wonderful people involved in various other areas of church life – flowers, cleaners, gardeners, servers welcomers, rota compilers, and their input too is highly valued. I would encourage more people to see this as a 'something' they can take part in as an offering towards the church life. Regarding the servers special mention should be made of those who are regular and dedicated servers – Alex, Seb and Benedict, also Calum, Leni, Rose, Sam, Emily, Anna, Kinga, and in a welcome return, Nathan. Others serve from time to time and they are always welcome.

I am grateful in particular to the Finance Committee as a whole who not only guide me with the finances but also look after so many aspects of church management – fabric, H&S, and so on. Also Skip's marvellous ability to read statements and deduce what is going on. Thanks also to Angela and Karina, our great and knowledgeable safeguarding reps.

Looking to the future – alongside all the things I have mentioned – we will soon be installing the projector and screen at Cranleigh thanks to the generous donations of the four people. We will also be looking at the sacristies and improving them thanks to another generous donor. We will later this year be looking at the question of how our integration and relationship with Dorking Parish can develop to our mutual benefit and the mission of the

Church. We will be undertaking a review of mass times along with all other parishes so that by 2025 we can run both Dorking and Cranleigh and Bramley with two priests most of the time but also with only one as necessary. We have now paid off almost entirely our debt on the Hall and we will be looking at projects that the Mission Team identifies which fit with our development plan.

Finally, I would like to thank anyone that I should have thanks but have not! I really do appreciate all the support you give me, us. In particular I would like to thank personally our Parish Secretary who is getting better and better and more and more indispensable. I would like to thank very much Jane, our tireless Pastoral worker whose gentle and prayerful influence is so beneficial to us all. Patrick Bergin for taking on the Finance responsibilities willingly and highly professionally. They won't thank me but I would like to thank Jim, Mike, Win for their banking dedication and Nick P and Martin for their care of our buildings which has been beyond reproach.

I would like to thank you for coming tonight and commend this report to you all.