

Weybridge Deanery

Newsletter

No.6



Parishes in the Deanery

- Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge
- The Holy Family, Addlestone
- St. Anne's, Chertsey
- Sacred Heart, Cobham
- The Parish of St. Cuthbert, Egham (Englefield Green and Egham Hythe)
- The Holy Name, Esher
- All Saints, Hersham
- St. Barnabas, Molesey
- The Sacred Heart, Sunningdale
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton
- St. Erconwald, Walton on Thames
- Catholic Chaplaincy to Royal Holloway, University of London

Religious Communities

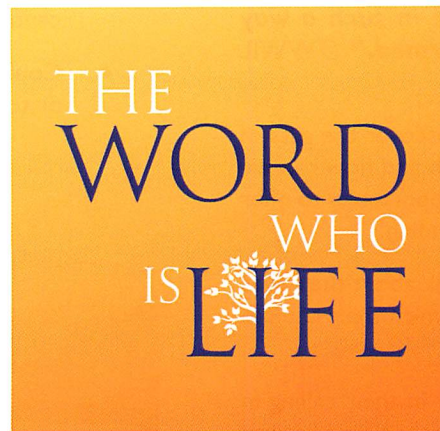
- Comboni Missionaries (Verona Fathers)
- Company of Mary
- Hospitaller Sisters of the Sacred Heart
- The Josephites
- St. Patrick's Missionary Society
- Salesians of Don Bosco
- Sisters of the Christian Retreat

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www.weybridgedeanery.org

The Word Who Is Life: Gift and Challenge



In the autumn, Bishop Richard launched his *Pastoral Plan* for our Diocese, with the title *'The Word Who Is Life'*. As he told a large gathering of parishioners from across our deanery in November, its title is drawn from the opening words of the First Letter of John, words which have been guiding his thought ever since he became our Bishop.

"The Word who is life – we have no other Subject!" The Gospel is neither an intellectual theory nor a moral code but a **person**, Jesus Christ, who calls us into relationship with him – a rich and varied relationship, as Lord, lover, brother, saviour; as fascinating, awesome, beautiful, broken and glorified. Our calling is to enter wholeheartedly into that lived and loving relationship. But our calling is also to invite others to do the same.

"The Word who is life – we have no other Subject!" **We** – not Bishop Richard, or your parish priest, or someone else; but **all of us together**, lay and ordained, young and old, male and female. Bishop Richard has set out the key elements that will make possible this task of living and sharing Christ's life: **prayer** as the

foundation for all we do; **formation** both to deepen our understanding of our faith and to give us tools to share it, and **mission** itself – less an extra 'task' than a whole way of living.

Pope Francis put it this way: we are called to be "a Church which goes forth" and "The Church which goes forth is a community of missionary disciples, who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice" – and (most importantly) who know "that the Lord has taken the initiative, loving us first." (*The Joy of The Gospel* n.24)

Bishop Richard has given us a framework. Now it is our task, working both within our own parishes and across our whole deanery area, to 'put flesh' on that plan.

We live in very challenging times – not simply politically and economically because of Brexit (assuming it goes ahead) but also culturally. Our society is sometimes labelled 'post-Christian' (or even 'post-religious'). Moreover, for the foreseeable future we shall have fewer ordained priests. To respond to these factors we all need a change of mindset. Forget the idea that 'Father runs the parish', while the laity just 'go to church'. **All of us** are the parish. **All of our gifts** are needed both to make Church happen on Sunday and to share the Gospel in daily life. And that is the wonderful opportunity that lies before us, opening the way to a new flourishing of our personal faith and a new vitality in our communities as we 'go forth' to live and to share the Good News. Let us travel joyfully together.

Fr. Rob Esdaile
(Dean of Weybridge)

The Word Who Is Life - Key Themes

The Bishop's Pastoral Plan came out of a lengthy consultation period. Here are some of the highlights of what parishioners fed back to Bishop Richard and his responses. These are 'conversation starters', inviting each of us to respond. Talk about them at home and in the pews!

Living Our Baptismal Vocation

"Now is the time for the Lay Faithful to be open in new ways to the Vocation that comes through Baptism. This is not 'optional'. It will be lived out in myriad ways, but every person must respond to the wonder of the Saving Love of Christ in such a way that the world around us is transformed." (TWWIL #13)

- How can we help each other to discover the gifts of the Spirit ('charisms') given to each and how can we ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to offer their gifts and to grow in understanding?
- How can we help the young to think about their lives in terms of a calling from God in which their choices matter?
- How can we help people to grow in their calling in later life – especially at those transitions (leaving home, marriage, the children leaving home, retirement, in illness) when old ways of doing things are disrupted and new opportunities open up?
- How can we help people to reflect on the possibility of a life dedicated to the service of the Church – by ordination as priest or deacon, in vowed 'religious life' or by vocational work?

Evangelisation and Catechesis

Pope Francis has put new emphasis on communicating the heart of Christian faith: **"the message has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and, at the same time, most necessary."** (*The Joy of the Gospel* n.35) That asks us to reflect regularly on our practice:

- When are we involved in Evangelisation (a first presentation of faith to invite a response)?
- When are we undertaking Catechesis (speaking to someone who has already arrived at a level of faith)?
- When are we supporting people who have become whole-hearted disciples of Jesus?
- How to balance the openness of an invitation and the seriousness of faith's demand in helping people to prepare for the sacraments?

Putting Prayer At The Centre

"Prayer is imperative. Without prayer, all will come to nothing. Life without prayer is no life at all – and our Diocese is all about Life, the Life that is Christ." (TWWIL #3)

- What do **I** need to support my own prayer life, and how can our parish support the life of prayer of each parishioner?
- What formation in prayer is needed in our parishes by people at different stages of life?
- What opportunities do we offer in our own parishes (over and above celebration of the Eucharist – so central to our parish life)?
- Could **I** be called to be a 'prayer guide' for others – or to find a 'prayer guide' for myself?



The Role of Our Schools

"The School is, for many young Catholics, their most significant experience of the Church's life." (TWWIL #75)

- Can we do more to celebrate and support their work – including the role of the chaplaincy in supporting their Catholic ethos?



Sharing Responsibility

Bishop Richard's pastoral plan accepts the unique role in the community of the parish priest, who has final responsibility in parish matters (TWWIL #32) but recognises that the lay faithful may be better qualified in many practical and organisational skills. Bishop Richard recognises the call for laity and clergy to work more closely together and the need to explore new ways of doing things.

“Included in this aspect of the life of the Diocese will be the training of Spiritual Directors and Prayer Companions, along with training of lay faithful to preside at liturgies when a priest is not present (Divine Office, Eucharistic Adoration, Funeral Liturgies, for example)”. TWWIL #33

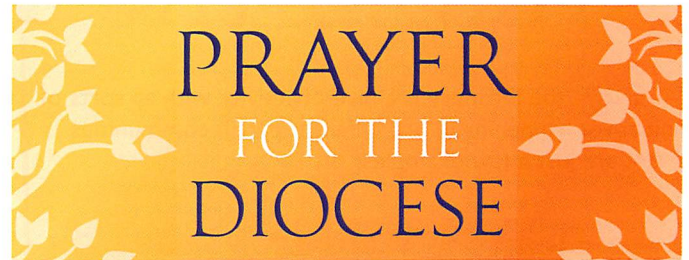
'Ministries' in the Church extend beyond the most obviously 'liturgical' ones (reading, serving, being an extraordinary minister of the eucharist, being a sacristan) to welcome and hospitality, support of the bereaved, visiting the sick, etc..

- What should our priests and deacons be relieved of in order to devote themselves to the core of their ministry – and to allow lay people to live out their baptismal calling?
- How can lay people develop as leaders and be drawn more fully into decision-making in our communities?
- Is any group excluded or neglected in our parish?
- What formation is needed – both by clergy and by lay people – to enable this shift in expectations and roles?
- Should some lay roles involve a commissioning to that particular ministry? What spiritual and practical support is needed for such ministries?

Cost and Opportunities

Bishop Richard acknowledges opportunities for our parishes to work together in practical ways, increasing our impact, saving on 'back-office' costs and achieving economies of scale.

- What support can we give to lay workers and ministers in neighbouring parishes?
- Are there needs which could be met more effectively met by parishes working together (E.g. formation, outreach, ministry to particular groups, administration?)
- If there are cost implications of meeting such needs, how can these be met?
- Can we already identify one or two areas for small-scale actions which will make a difference to how we operate?



Lord, the Word who is Life.
May all the people of our Diocese
grow in openness
to the power of the Holy Spirit,
so that through a growth
in understanding and courage,
and truly open to your call,
we may bear powerful witness
to all around us,
for you are Lord for ever and ever.
Amen.



Cobham Dexit?

Looking across the whole diocese, not only have some parish communities been recognised as likely to be brought together in the future (as Molesey, Walton and Hersham are already working together in Weybridge Deanery) but so have deanery boundaries been changed. In our own deanery the only proposed change is that Cobham should transfer to the Epsom Deanery at some stage. But, whatever happens, we can be confident that we'll continue to work closely with our friends there in the years ahead.

You Are Not Alone!

On the journey ahead, not only do we have many resources to share within the Deanery, but we are also supported by the members of the diocesan Formation Team, based at the St. Philip Howard Centre (formerly *Dabcec*) in Crawley – with advisers on Spirituality and Formation, Youth, Social Action, Dialogue & Unity, Inclusion, Marriage and Family Life and Liturgy. They can offer formation within our deanery – training local people to share that training and formation with others.

Around the Deanery

As always, the Deanery is a hive of activity, with all sorts of initiatives happening in our different parish communities. Here are just a few examples.

Our Deanery Website

This is a really useful reference-point for finding out what is going on in our area (as it includes links to individual parish newsletters across the Deanery, a Deanery calendar and all sorts of other useful links).

See www.veybridgedeanery.org

Bible, Formation and Prayer

Weybridge: 60 people are already signed up to do a course exploring The Book of Revelation, starting in late March. It also holds a Rosary morning prayer group with the school's (St Charles) mums.

Esher will be hosting a 'What's going on in the Bible' course for three weeks commencing in February.

Alpha

A series of sessions exploring different questions about faith. In each session we share a meal, watch a short film and discuss our thoughts and experiences. **Walton** will be offering a new course in 2019. Parishioners who are interested should contact **St Erconwald's** Parish office. **Esher** completed its first Alpha programme in December; it will run another programme May – July, 2019. **Weybridge** will offer at least one programme in 2019 to commence in Autumn 2019. **Thames Ditton** begins a new Alpha Course on April 23rd.

First Holy Communion – a different approach

One resource which has gradually gained in popularity across the diocese is the *Growing Up Catholic* programme. Rather than catechists teaching classes to children in the absence of their parents, the parents sit with their children, sharing their faith and spending quality time with their sons and daughters at the same time. It makes tangible the words said to parents at every baptism, telling them that they are "the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith" and urging them to "be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Divine Renovation

Various parishes across the deanery are using Fr. James Mallon's book *Divine Renovation* (which tells the story of the renewal of a parish in Halifax, Nova Scotia) as a basis for reviewing their pastoral strategy. For instance, both **Esher** and **Thames Ditton** parishes have been developing new 'Mission Statements', while several communities are sending delegates to the national 'DR19' conference in Birmingham this month.

Charities

Most parishes have fund-raising efforts for charities at home and abroad - many of which become central planks of the social calendar, with fund-raisers of all sorts, from cake-sales and sponsored walks to ceilidhs and quiz-nights. Some have links going back years with particular places in the Third World, while others choose different good causes every year. We should be tremendously proud of the generosity and creativity of our parishes in this particular form of pastoral outreach and missionary endeavour. Doubtless, there is also much good practice in this area to be shared between our communities.

Pilgrimages

Weybridge

Youth and Families pilgrimage to Spain 9th - 13th April
Camino 2019 - 22nd May - 28th May
Day pilgrimage to Canterbury Friday 31st May
Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi 24th to 30th September
Lourdes Pilgrimage with the Diocese - 26th July - 1st August

Walton/Molesey and Hersham

There will be a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from 29th May to 5th June lead by Fr Richard. Cost £1500. (Contact number 0207 485 3003)

Our Parishioners

Esher has paid tribute to Doris Ashurst, one of our regular parishioners and Sacristan. She received Communion from Fr David on her birthday – 1st January. The Mass was followed by tea, coffee and birthday cake to celebrate her 99th birthday!

Weybridge Deanery Week of Accompanied Prayer

Christ the Prince of Peace,
Portmore Park Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8JD

Sunday 23rd - Friday 28th June, 2019

For more information and an application form, please contact the parish office:
01932 843643

Who is it for?
It does not matter where you are on your faith journey or whether you find it easy to pray or not. This week is for discovering more.

In reality, it is God inviting you ...

In preparation for the *Deanery Week of Accompanied Prayer*, please come along to **Christ the Prince of Peace**, Parish Hall, **Deepening Prayer, different ways of praying - Tuesday 12th March at 7.30pm.**