

House' would be, not only in raising money but also through the events that provided an opportunity to build on the 'community' within the parish. Thanks so much for all the support.

To all the members of the PPC, I thank you all sincerely for your support and for the generous contributions you make to the success of the parish. To all the parish volunteers, everything you do is appreciated; we couldn't do it without you.

I hope and pray that the parish will continue 'grow and flourish' with Roger Wilshaw as our new Chair. I wish him the very best and hope you will support him in his work.

## 2018 IN NUMBERS

Sacraments 2018	
Baptisms	18
First Holy Communion	11
Confirmation	13
Marriages	2
Funerals	13
RCIA	1

Below is a short representation of the groups and some activities that took place in the parish in 2018.

Group	Numbers / Members
SVP – raised £1,170 on their appeal	15
SVP – Soup for Sudan – raised £460+	55
SVP – Healing Service	60
Charismatic Prayer Group	8
Mothers' Prayers	10
Sewing Group	14
Ladies' Afternoon Tea	34
Men's Breakfast x 2	40
Book Club	12
Macmillan – raised £615.35	50+
Sunday Tea and Coffee – raised £300+	25 to 30
CAFOD – raised £1,250.20 in two appeals	
Pilgrimage – Poland	49
Pilgrimage – Walsingham	8
Missio Red Boxes – raised £2,718.23	88
100 Club – raised £3,758.11 since starting	138
Christmas Raffle – raised over £500	
Summer Brunch	50

## DIOCESAN YEAR OF PRAYER AND VOCATION

Bishop Peter declared 2018 as a Diocesan Year of Prayer and Vocation, with a suggested theme for each month for prayer focused on our Catholic and Christian vocation. With this as a guide, we created a parish programme that help people to experience a wider range of types of prayer.

One of the most fruitful of these occasions was the sessions of quiet meditative prayer, which remained the most popular of the events staged. Evenings of Taizé prayer saw Fr. John leading the chants and songs which originated from this centre of spirituality in France, with his guitar. This is an ecumenical style of prayer.

Two other significant events were firstly, the 24 Hours for the Lord, held on 9 and 10 March. Secondly, in September, were the three days of exposition and Holy

Hour to coincide with the National Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool. A group of five people and Deacon Philip attended the event.

In October, traditionally the month of the rosary, the Pastoral Area Council staged a Day for Mary. This focused on the gift of the rosary as a source of meditation and devotion. Well supported it led to a renewal of the commitment of the parish to offer opportunities to pray the rosary.

During the year, Pope Francis called a world meeting of families in Dublin in August. The families Burgess and the Traynor- Bucknell attended.

*By Deacon Philip*

## REPORT ON JUST ONE HOUSE

We launched our project in June 2018 with the aim of raising £3,600 in support of Refugees Welcome Milton Keynes (RWMK), to enable a house to be fitted out for another refugee family from Syria. This was in response to the appeal from Pope Francis for every parish in Europe to support one family.

Our year-long fundraising activities have included a sponsored walk, a summer brunch, a special collection, St Patrick's celebration, a pledging system, and individual donations. I am very pleased to report that, thanks to the generosity of the parish, we will by June 2019 have collected a total of at least £4,600.

We will be joined after Mass on Sunday 30 June by Marie Gracie, the inspiration behind Just One House, and we will be handing over a cheque for £3,500 for British Red Cross, who are responsible for fitting out the House, and a cheque for £1,100 for RWMK for their commitments to the families.

I would like to express my gratitude to the PPC and you the people of the parish for all your support.

*Jim Aylward, April 2019*

## THE FUTURE OF SACRED HEART IN RELATION TO CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Pastoral Area Council asked all the member churches to look to the future and think about the impact of the housing development in their area.

We looked at Central Bedfordshire plan for housing to 2035. The plan, called Pre-Submission, is for proposals from now to 2035. There are many significant developments currently under construction not accounted for – e.g. Amphill South, Flitwick, Steppingley Road, Marston (Millennium Park).

Based on the Pre-Submission plan we have estimated that there will be 1,860 houses in seven different locations in the parish and 5,063 in Marston. Giving a total of 6,923.

There are numerous submissions marked on the plan where the council has not deliberated, so no verdict is available but if, say, 10% are accepted this would likely mean 2,000 more houses.

Based on current number of 6,923 taken solely from the Pre-Submission Plan a calculation of the potential impact on the parish was made.

The main assumptions are:

- 10% claim a Catholic history
- 2.5 people per household
- 10% of these, 1% of the new population are likely to be practising Catholics

- Therefore we can expect 175-200 new parishioners from the future developments in the Pre-Submission plan
- This compares with the overall parish population of 287 in 2014, 244 in 2016, 233 in 2017 and estimated 200 in 2018

By A. Gadsden and S. Yates

# Sacred Heart Church Flitwick



## Parish Pastoral Council Annual Report 23 May 2019

FR. JOHN DANFORD – PARISH PRIEST

I would like to thank Siobhan as her time as Chair draws to a close. She has been conscientious and thorough in her approach, which is just as well for me, making my own transition from one to two parishes that much easier. Also, many thanks to Deacon Philip for his support and hard work, and also to Suzanne for her efficiency as Pastoral Administrator. And, in case I've missed out anyone - thank you to everyone else as well!

CHAIR'S REPORT – SIOBHAN CAMPBELL

As I step down, I thank you all most sincerely for your support, which has been magnificent over the past number of years.

Reflecting on the past four years, the words of our parish prayer come to mind given the levels 'of challenge and change' that the parish has experienced. I signed off last year hoping that through completing our Year of Prayer and Vocation that our parish will be blessed with vibrancy, and support all the people of the parish. I keep mentioning this vibrancy, but it is what makes the parish of the Sacred Heart so special. The prayerful and spiritual nature is so strong, it is the smiles and handshakes, the kind words, the warm welcome each time you arrive and the willingness of so many to contribute their time and skills, which breathes such life into our wonderful parish.

We are blessed to have Fr. John as our parish priest and my prayers for him to be granted energy and zeal have been granted. He has been able to balance the needs of two parishes with such different needs, and yet provide such a strong ministry and service to us all.

Suzanne Yates, our Pastoral Administrator, must be mentioned. She has ensured the smooth running of our parish even when she is on holiday, she to keep all the activities progressing. I want to thank her personally for her support to me in my role.

And particularly Deacon Philip, who arrived to my house over four years ago for, as I thought, a cup of coffee and a custard cream, and left me shocked and honoured to be asked to take on the role of chair. Over many cups of coffee, we have worked through many challenges and I leave this role with a friendship I would never have made without this experience. I would like to thank him from the whole parish for his dedication and service.

I mentioned last year how, as the Pastoral Parish Council, we had been focused on working through the various changes, and how this had required a focus solely on our parish and how we wished to bring an outreach opportunity to the parish. I had hoped that such an initiative could bring the parish together but I had no idea how successful the initiative 'Just one

### Churches Together in Ampthill and Flitwick

In 2018, parishioners from Sacred Heart participated in

- Open Churches in Lent
- Walk of Witness through Ampthill
- Pentecost in the Park – held in Flitwick
- Wreath laying on Remembrance Day

We have two representatives on the committee: Helen Burgess and Debbie Lewis.

### THANKSGIVING MASS AND RECEPTION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Saturday afternoon the 15 September saw the first-ever thank you Mass for volunteers at Sacred Heart church. Upwards of 60 people who give unpaid work to the parish gathered for the service. Fr. John got over his message that volunteering is akin to love, therefore a truly Christian activity. He said that because of the fall in numbers of priests who used to do 'all the work', now the laity 'have to do more', and he ended by urging us, including himself, to 'Get stuck in together.'

After the Mass, people filled the parish room which offered a fine selection of finger food, cheese, biscuits, sweets for the kids (and for some voracious grown-ups), tea, coffee and wine. People chatted, while kitchen volunteers did their own bit for the volunteers. The service and socialising were well received; hopefully this will be a regular event.

Here are only some of the 199 jobs carried out by 113 volunteers, without whom the parish would be poorer in looks, operation and spirit: sacristan duty; cleaning; reading; collectors and counters; altar servers; Eucharistic ministers; organising/running book club, pilgrimage; SVP; DIY; councillors for the PAC and PPC; fundraising ... and much other unsung work.

By Chris Yates (volunteer newsletter copy-editor)

### PLANNED GIVING AND GIFT AID

The offerings made by envelopes and loose plate have not unexpectedly, reduced following the introduction of only one weekend Mass

The positive news is that the trend of parishioners now making their offerings by standing order is still increasing, (results below) with the average offerings equating to approximately £750 per week.

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Offertory Envelopes Used					
84	75	70	62	56	45
Gift Aid Declarations					
98	99	105	101	98	99
Standing Orders					
49	53	69	72	76	78

This year, the parish will again be able to take advantage of the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme which will allow us to claim a tax rebate on non-gift-aided offerings up to a maximum of £8,000. This should result in an additional £2,000 each year.

By John Fletcher (planned giving and gift aid coordinator)