

ParishQuarterly

Our Lady & All Saints Catholic Church, Otley

www.olasotley.org

J U L Y 2 0 1 9



The Priesthood ... a life of service

We recently celebrated the feast of Saints Peter and Paul which is still one of the very few Holydays of Obligation in the Church's calendar. This perhaps reflects not simply the importance of the two Saints themselves, so much as the foundation of the Church, the establishment of the Papacy, and indeed a celebration of the priesthood. It's also easy to see that Saints Peter and Paul both emphasise Pope Francis' often quoted: "There is no Saint without a past, and no sinner without a future".

The everyday duties of a priest are rarely highlighted and indeed it is easy to take our priests for granted. We assume there'll be at Mass each day, come rain or come shine: when we need a priest to anoint our dying friends or relatives do we ever imagine one is not going to be available? It seems we take so little advantage of the sacrament of Reconciliation today but who could contemplate it simply not being available because there is no priest to administer absolution and confer the Lord's forgiveness? Similarly, how many parents fully expect the priest to be available for their children's Baptism?

Whenever I visit different parts of the country I see elderly Parish Priests, often covering several parish communities, tiring but never failing in their commitment to serve.

One of my neighbours from my schooldays for example, is nearing his 80th birthday and is still Parish Priest to 3 parishes in the North East. This life-long and life-time devotion is remarkable but I would suggest not exceptional.

Clergy generally have had to endure damaging publicity in the past few years, and it was hard not to feel desperately sorry for the adverse reception afforded Pope Francis on his visit to Ireland. Whilst the media thrives on the criticism of a relatively few members of the clergy, they fail to acknowledge the enormous number of good men, carrying out their priestly duties faithfully and with little personal gain. Sadly, it's the every day "extra-ordinary" specialness of the priesthood that is all too easily discounted. For our part, let us be truly grateful for our Priests and strive to keep them in our prayers each day.

It is appropriate that we are currently celebrating Fr Tom's Diamond Jubilee: please see Page 3 for his reflections on 60 years in the priesthood.

The "Tablet" recently included a series of articles under the title "The Priestly Life". The Tablet has kindly allowed us to photocopy these and copies may be found at the back of church.

Joe McGuinness

Biblical Reflections on Priesthood

The Priesthood is a recurring topic in the Scriptures and surfaces at one of the earliest places, Genesis 14. Here we come across the figure of **Melchizedek** described as the King of Salem (Jerusalem) and “Priest of God most High”. He is encountered by Abraham during his wanderings and is unique for his time in offering a sacrifice of bread and wine. His name crops up again in **Psalm 109 (110)** and in the letter to the Hebrews and it is used to this day in connection with Ordination to the Priesthood. For a character who only occupies a few lines of scripture, his influence is immense and is worth more space than I am able to give it here.

The next significant figure is Aaron the brother of Moses. Where Moses was the Prophet, Aaron was the Priest and the mouthpiece of his brother who described himself as “a slow speaker and not able to speak well”. Aaron, a Levite, was the first of the line of the High Priests of Judaism which continued until the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in AD 70. There remains in the

Old Testament the same tension between the Law (Priesthood) and Prophets that existed between Moses and Aaron and which continues in New Testament times.

When we come to the Gospels we find that Jesus himself has little to say directly about the Priesthood other than the occasional rebuke to the religious authorities (**Matthew 23** for example) and what is known as His priestly Prayer in **John 17**. Paul in his letters speaks more of presiding at the Eucharist than the kind of priesthood we are familiar with but we can detect that for Paul leadership is more pastoral than ritualistic. His **first letter to Timothy** goes into detail about pastoral practice.

Our final source for this short piece is the **Letter to the Hebrews**. It is not an easy letter to read but it presents Jesus as High Priest and brings us back to where we started with Melchizedek (**chapters 6&7**). There is also no space to discuss the idea of the priesthood of all believers mentioned in **1 Peter 2:7**.

Just to finish what can be a heavy topic and to add a little lightness I have compiled a list of my 10 favourite priests on the basis of their influence on my own spiritual life. You might have fun in picking your own list!

- 1 **Melchizedek (above) unknown**
- 2 **Augustine of Hippo 364-430**
- 3 **Ignatius of Loyola 1491-1556**
- 4 **John of the Cross 1542-1591**
- 5 **Hans Kung 1928-**
- 6 **Thomas Merton 1915-1968**
- 7 **Gustavo Gutierrez 1928-**
- 8 **Oscar Romero 1917-1980**
- 9 **Pope John XXIII 1881-1963**
- 10 **Raymond E Brown 1928-1998**

Some are saints, No.10 is a Biblical scholar. I would have included Francis of Assisi but he remained a Deacon until his death. Therese of Lisieux and Theresa of Avila have influenced my spiritual life but they are women! I do not forget the many other lesser known priests who have helped me, including Fr. Tom to whom this article is dedicated.

Frank Bowe



We Are Pentecostal People

The pupils and staff at St Joseph's Primary School celebrated Pentecost day on Friday 7th June, beginning with Mass led by Year 5. The theme was the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and a variety of objects were brought to the altar to reflect these gifts. These included cheer-leading pompoms, a feather, a present, a clock, a copy of the school rules and others. Each object was explained and everyone was encouraged to allow the Holy Spirit to help them develop these gifts.

The church was brightly decorated with banners and pictures made by Year 4 depicting the Holy Spirit and all the children were wearing their own clothes in red, yellow and orange to remind them that the Holy Spirit is like a fire because it is warm and comforting. After Mass we had a whole school photo of the children arranged in a flame to remind us all of

the Holy Spirit and the tongues of fire. In the afternoon the children made Pentecost cards to give to their families and were rewarded with an ice lolly in the colours of red, yellow and orange.

On Pentecost Sunday children from St Joseph's led the International Pentecost Mass. The theme focused on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the different nationalities within our school and Parish community.



Pentecost Sunday gave us the opportunity to celebrate the diversity and unity of the school and Parish community. The children dressed in national costumes and read the bidding prayers in different languages: Polish, Mandarin, French, Hindi, Cebuano, Italian and English.

All the children had learnt an African hymn which they sang at the Mass: it was beautiful. The readings reminded us that we should open our hearts to allow the Holy Spirit to work in us.

“Come Holy Spirit, and make us Pentecostal People.”

After Mass refreshments from different countries were served at the Parish Centre to raise money for a battery replacement and spare pads for the defibrillator at Menston railway station in memory of our Parishioner, Sue Hope.

Marie Russell

Fr Tom's Diamond Jubilee

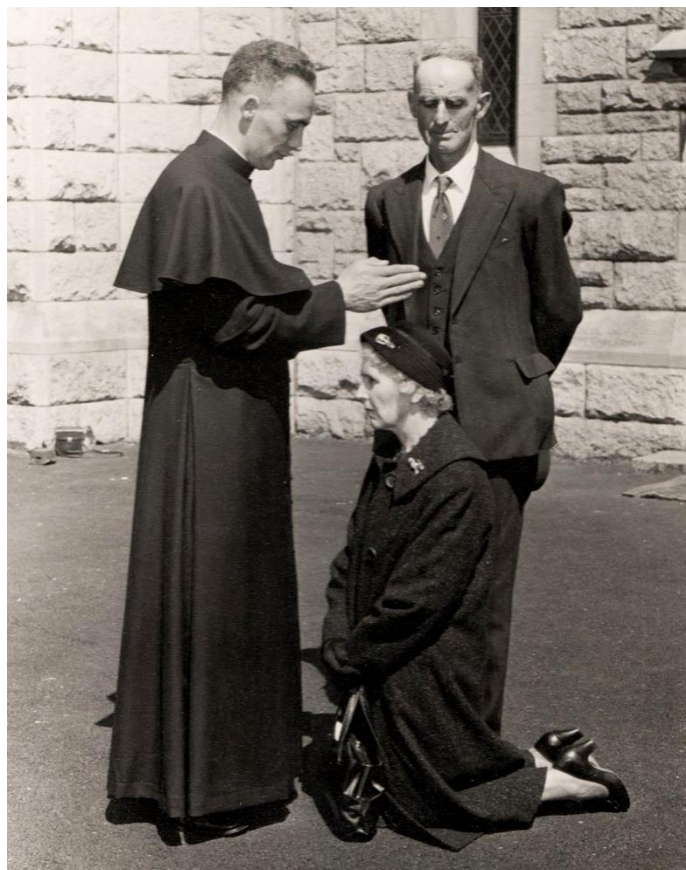
Originally from Kerry in the South of Ireland, Fr Tom was ordained a priest at All Hallows College, Dublin on 14th June 1959. A month later he arrived in the Diocese of Leeds where he has spent his entire priestly life.

His first appointment was at St Patrick's Parish, Huddersfield. As you can imagine, coming from rural Ireland to an industrial city in the North of England was quite a culture shock. There were a number of things that made for a happy life in Huddersfield. He was fortunate to have for his first Parish Priest a gentle and caring man in Fr Pat McGee. He, together with his housekeeper Mary, ensured that the presbytery was a real home for the four priests who lived there.

The pastoral life of the parish was busy with around 1,500 people attending Sunday Mass, large queues for Confession, many Baptisms, marriages, funerals and converts to the Church. The parish was a vibrant place both spiritually and socially, with lots of different organisations and activities. The Yorkshire people were sincere and genuine, and always very welcoming. It was while at Huddersfield, Fr Tom began to follow Huddersfield Town and has remained an ardent supporter ever since.

Following his initial seven years in Huddersfield, Fr Tom then served in the parishes of Bingley, Hunslet, Hemsworth, Batley, and his final twelve years here at Our Lady and All Saints, Otley.

"While the parishes in which I served may have varied considerably, one constant has been the loyalty and



In keeping with tradition, Fr Tom gives his first blessing as a priest to his Mother.

support of the people. After all, it's people who really matter, and it has been a privilege to have shared in the joys and sorrows of so many families."

In sixty years as a priest, Fr Tom has seen many changes, describing some for the better and some for the worse. "People's attitudes towards faith and morality may have changed but there is a nucleus of fervent, committed people who keep Christ at the centre of their lives and who still observe the two great commandments of loving God above all things, and loving our neighbour as ourselves."

On behalf of the Parish, thank you so very much Fr Tom for sharing this celebration of your 60 years in the Priesthood.

Mary Vickers



Our thanks to Agnes

For the entire Parish, perhaps the most joyous of all occasions in the year is the day when our children make their first Holy Communion. For all of us it really is a day to remember. Next year will be a little different for one Parishioner. Mrs Agnes Skeoch is stepping down from the role of Catechist after 30 years of helping to prepare children for this very special event.

"I've enjoyed it all so much and have felt so privileged to have been involved. I think the preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion has changed little over the years. The material may change but essentially it's always been about trying to bring it to the children's level of understanding, explaining the strong link between how Jesus is always there for us no matter what we do, and how Holy Communion builds on that and strengthens the bond with Jesus. Understanding how we receive the body and blood of Jesus each time we receive Holy Communion is, of course, beyond us all, no matter how old we are! So it's impossible for children to take that on board. But allowing them to appreciate this "closeness" with Jesus, and how it helps them to be kinder to each other, more loving and forgiving, is probably the



fundamental aim of the preparation."

"The parents' involvement and their encouragement of the children at home throughout the preparation is really vital. Sharing in the programme can be so beneficial to both parents and children and over the years I have been thrilled to have seen some non-Catholic parents actually become Catholics through the involvement in their children's preparation. As I look back I think there can be few greater rewards than that!"



PRESENTATION TO LEEDS GENERAL INFIRMARY STROKE UNIT

Rita and I recently presented a cheque for £1,000 to LGI Stoke Unit in memory of my late husband Eric who sadly died last year following a stroke. The photograph shows Sisters Claire Brown and Jade Kaye who provided such wonderful care of Eric. The donation was principally the result of Parishioners' generous support of Danny Cooney's marathon - running which he promised Eric when visiting him in hospital. I am extremely grateful to Danny for his incredible efforts in running a total of 117 miles, two full marathons and five half-marathons. "It doesn't get any easier", said Danny: "The training definitely gets harder, and when running I always thank God as I cross the finishing line!"

I am also very grateful to the Fundraising team and Nigel Francis for organising events in the Parish Centre including a sell-out St Patrick's Day Irish Breakfast, with music by Greg Mulholland's Summercross band and the Otley Autistic Musicians. Special thanks for the waitressing support from Year 6 girls Eliza, Niamh and Mathilde.

All of these events were not simply about raising money. They were much more about people coming together as a Parish family, forming new friendships, and enjoying being together. That would have made Eric very proud indeed."

Moira Wallace

In addition to the moneys raised for the LGI Stroke Unit, a further £1,000 was raised for the Ghana Water Project of Natalie O'Shea. I am delighted to say Natalie's story will appear in the next issue of Parish Quarterly. Ed.



Our young Parishioner and altar server, Niamh Casey, writes about her role as this year's Otley Carnival Queen.

"The Carnival began with the parade through the town. Seated in our beautifully decorated float we followed the pipe band and Terry the Town Crier. Seeing so many happy and excited faces all along the route made me feel proud to be representing my town. I think the carnival brings the people of Otley together, as a community.

After the parade, we processed onto the field where I was crowned by the Town Mayor. I would like to thank all those from our parish for supporting me in the carnival parade as it meant a lot to me. I am now looking forward to my year as Carnival Queen." **Niamh**

Weddings

Matthew Sefton & Maria Anna Zolkowska
Paul Whitley & Amber Davison

Baptisms

Reuben Thomas Ellis
Iver Allen Rafferty
Katie Smith
Ivy Rose Pooley
Reuben John Gill
Molly Eve Hudson
Kaitlyn Faye Brown
Lucas William Brown

Recently Deceased

Ron Dickenson

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen*