

## **Building-up the Catholic Parish of St. Edmund's**

***“Through the love of the Father, Son and Spirit, our Parish will be the Body of Christ in Godalming”***

Last week I mentioned our first two initiatives – our ongoing commitment to the Alpha course and the employment of a Parish Assistant. This week I want to focus on our third initiative, Know Your Neighbour (“KYN”) and share with you some other news.

As most of you will know, so far this year we have run two KYN weekends. These were intended to introduce the concept, as well as to help us to learn something about the process. These week-ends elicited a lot of really positive responses. Many Parishioners have already commented on how they now know the names of people they regularly see in church. This is an encouraging step forward as we continue to build our Parish into a community “where everyone knows your name”. However, knowing someone’s name is only the starting point in strengthening our sense of being a community of faith.

As we go forward, we are planning to hold KYN week-ends on a regular monthly basis. Moreover, from time to time I would like to encourage all Parishioners, through KYN, to take part in brief activities that will strengthen the links we have with one another. The next KYN weekend will take place over on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Over this week-end, I would like to invite all Parishioners on arriving at Mass not only to collect your name badge, but to then go and sit next to somebody either that you do not know or that you do not usually sit next to. I would like this person to be your Prayer Partner for the service – that is someone you can pray for and who will pray for you throughout the Mass. You do not need to know what you are praying for; God knows. Please try this and find someone new to sit next to. My wish is that we will use KYN week-ends to help us to relate to those around us in church in a more prayerful way. Praying for each other will not only be a great blessing for our Parish, but also a way of fulfilling our Christian calling to pray for one another. Jesus says ‘This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you.’ (Jn 15:12)

As part of our renewal programme within the Parish I have decided to install two large TV screens in St. Joseph’s Church, Milford. My hope is that this will enable those who attend there to participate more fully in the Mass. As well as hymns and Mass responses, Parish information will also be displayed. The information displayed will be done carefully and in a timely way so that it will become an aid to participation in the Mass and life in the Parish and not a distraction. We are all getting information on screens in public spaces much more frequently now and I believe we need to use contemporary ways to help people pray and invite them to enter more fully in the life of the Parish. I appreciate this will not be everyone’s ‘cup of tea’ but I hope those of you who may not welcome this development will see the reasons behind this move and give it a chance to bear fruit.

Finally, Bishop Richard has kindly bestowed on me the privilege of being appointed a Chapter Canon of Arundel Cathedral. The ceremony where this will take place will be during the Mass of St. Philip Howard on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 3pm at Arundel Cathedral. I hope some Parishioners would like to attend and perhaps, if you are thinking about attending, you would let me know via the Parish Office so that I can get a rough idea of numbers.

My prayer this week is that all Parishioners will respond positively to the KYN initiative and that the power of our prayers will be felt throughout the Parish. Please also pray for all those involved in or thinking about joining the current Alpha programme. May God guide them and help them as they try to find a relationship with His son, Jesus Christ.

God bless you all, Father David