

Parish Developments

As I mentioned in last week's Newsletter, two TV screens are going to be installed in St. Joseph's. Why is this change taking place? My hope is that these screens will help the congregation participate in the Mass more fully. The Second Vatican Council in its decree on the liturgy states: "With diligence and patience pastors of souls should see to the liturgical instruction of the faithful and their active participation, internal and external, in the liturgy, taking into account their age, condition, way of life and standard of religious culture." Elsewhere in that document it talks about our full, active and conscious participation. As familiarity with Mass declines, it seems to me that we need to make sure that access to the responses, music and prayers used in the Mass is easily accessible.

In our daily life increasingly more information and activity take place through screens. In the book *Divine Renovation*, Fr. James Mallon makes this point in the context of preaching: "Many would say that we now exist in a post-aural culture. We are audio-visual learners. We will refrain from entering the discussion of whether this is a positive development. It's just the way it is. It is unthinkable that a lecturer would present anywhere these days and not have something on screen. No executive would make a presentation to his or her board without the requisite PowerPoint or Keynote presentation. Young people are constantly stimulated by visuals through their hours in front of a television, computer or smartphone screen. Why then would we not seek to do the same thing when communicating the greatest story and the best news of all."

So, when is this change going to take place? The screens will be installed during the week of 1st October. During this week the Masses on Wednesday and Friday will take place at St. Edmund's. Once installed it will take a few weeks to get them operating as we will need to recruit volunteers and train them as operators who will work the screens via laptop computer during the Mass. As I have said before, change is not always easy to embrace, and the screens will not be everyone's 'cup of tea'. But I hope in time people will get used to the new arrangements and it will enhance everyone's experience of the Mass, especially those who are less familiar with its words and rituals.

We had a good response to our Alpha taster session last Sunday evening with almost everybody signing up for the full programme. Just a reminder there is another taster session this Sunday evening which will take place at St. John's, Farncombe at 7pm. If you know someone who you think would like to hear about the basics of the Christian faith presented in a modern, professional and friendly way then please invite them. They even get an evening meal to start things off. If you have not been yourself, then why not make this autumn the time you take that step. It will inspire you again as you re-live why it was you became a Christian in the first place. The full course takes place on a Sunday evening, again 7pm at St. John's, starting on 30th September.

May God bless you. Fr. David.