



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

PARISH VISITATION

DEANERY OF BANBURY & WARWICK

Parish of St Francis of Assisi, Kenilworth [120]

Parish of St Augustine's, Kenilworth [119]

Visitor: Canon Paul Fitzpatrick

Parish Priest Fr Kevin Hooper

Date of Visitation: 9 & 10 December 2023

Summary of Visitation Activities:

9 December 2023

Conversation with Fr Kevin Hooper.

Conversation with Mrs Helen Williams, Head of St Augustine's School and Mr Robert Duigan, Head of Crackley Hall School.

5.30pm Celebrate Mass at St Francis of Assisi, Kenilworth.

Meeting with parishioners after Mass.

Sunday 10 December

Celebrate Mass: 8.00am St Augustine, Kenilworth

Meet parishioners afterwards.

Celebrate Mass 10.30am St Francis of Assisi, Kenilworth.

Parish Meeting at St Francis of Assisi, Kenilworth.

A brief profile of the Parish.

St Augustine's Church, a beautiful Pugin foundation marks the beginning of the parish from 1842. Over those years the parish has grown and developed and the new build at St Francis of Assisi was completed in 1993 and consecrated in 2008. Both Churches are well maintained and are in excellent condition, due to the pro-active and dutiful care of the Parish Priest, supported by the Parish Finance Committee and the Parish Pastoral Council.

The parish community has a reputation for its collaborative nature in the past, which we would describe as co-responsible today. It is considered to be a dynamic community of faith.

Canon Paul Fitzpatrick was very interested to explore how this is so?

The Parish Meeting

The aim of the parish meeting was to discuss the implementation of the Diocesan Vision: *'Our vision is to be a Catholic Diocese which is faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ, full of missionary disciples who work together co-responsibly in vibrant communities of faith, joyful in their service of God and neighbour'.*

Canon Paul spent most of the weekend talking to small groups of parishioners. These groups included the Parish Finance Committee, the Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Catechists Mrs Jill Barr and Mrs Marian O' Leary, and Children's liturgy co-ordinators; the SVP group, the Parish Young Group, who are leading the CAFOD Live Simply programme, CWL, FHL, Salve, as well as many individual parishioners.

Canon Paul preached at each of the Masses. His theme was in the implementation of the diocesan vision, with an emphasis upon our four diocesan priorities and themes. These are Evangelisation, Formation, Liturgy and Worship, Social Outreach, with emphasis on Family life and Young People, and focusing on serving in a co-responsible manner.

At the parish meeting, Canon Paul discovered that each of these priorities had already been the centre of parish activity. Working groups had been formed to discuss and discern the following areas:

- Deepening Our Faith – Formation, Spiritual Growth.
- Sharing Our Faith – Evangelisation.
- Celebrating Our Faith – Worship & Liturgy.
- Witnessing Our Faith – Social Action.

Further reports revealed that the Parish has had a long-term formula to support a number of local projects and charities in the area. The current charities are Father Hudson Society, SVP Kenilworth and Myton Hospice. The parish also provides a SVP Warm Hub for the local community.

The work of compliance, H&S, and Safeguarding are a priority for the parish.

At the time of the visitation, there was concern that the application for planning for the installation of solar (photovoltaic) panels on the roof of the Parish Centre seems to have been delayed. Canon Paul has made enquires to the Diocesan Finance and Property committees to ensure this application is prioritised.

Canon Paul discovered that the reputation of this parish as a vibrant and lively community of faith is, indeed, very true. They seem to be further along the implementation of the Diocesan Vision than many other parish communities, because there is a genuine sense of Co-responsibility for the life of the parish.

Parish Masses and Liturgy

The parish Masses have been recently reduced from four to three, which is less of a burden on Fr Kevin, as well as ensuring that each of the Masses is well attended and there is a good number of Altar Servers, Readers and musicians at each of the Masses. There is a dedicated Music Group which takes responsibility for the Liturgy. Fr Kevin takes great care that the liturgy is celebrated well, and reverently which sets a prayerful tone across each of the Masses.

Affirmation of Parish Life

This is a vibrant community of faith, rooted in the love of God and neighbour, acting in a co-responsible manner. This parish has many gifts and blessings. This parish community could become a 'beacon parish' offering a model of service that others could follow.

I strongly recommend that St Francis and St Augustine's join a cluster a of parishes within the wider Leamington area, to promote and evidence good practice and faithful service. They could support those parishes which do not have these gifts and offer to the Banbury & Warwick Deanery, (especially the parishes in Warwickshire) a model of how to accomplish effective statutory compliance. This would be of great assistance to many parishes in the area.

Finally,

I should like to express my thanks to Fr Kevin and the Parish Community for their hospitality and warm welcome.

Canon Paul Fitzpatrick
15 June 2024.