



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

PARISH VISITATION DEANERY OF BANBURY & WARWICK

Parish of St. Anne, Wappenbury [202]

Visitor: Canon Paul Fitzpatrick
Parish Priest Fr Teddy O'Brien MSC

Date of Visitation: 20/21 April 2024

Summary of Visitation Activities:

20 April 2024

Conversation with Fr Teddy O'Brien MSC.

Gathering with parish representatives.

Sunday 17 March

Celebrate Mass: 8.30am, St. Anne's, Wappenbury.

Meet parishioners afterwards.

Celebrate Mass 10.30am, Princethorpe College.

Meet Parishioners afterwards.

A brief profile of the Parish.

St. Anne's Wappenbury is one of the oldest Churches in the diocese, dating from the 1790's, with the celebration of Mass in the area, predating the Church itself.

Since 1966 (nearly sixty years) the parish has been in the care of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. This coincides with their acquisition of Princethorpe College in 1966.

Since 2004, Fr Teddy O'Brien has been the parish priest at St Anne's. A warm, fatherly figure; he deeply loved by the parishioners of St. Anne's. In turn the parish has become a fine reflection of his character; it is a warm, welcoming parish, where all feel at home.

It sits in a rural location and serves a collection of villages and hamlets. It is also six miles from Leamington Spa, Rugby & Coventry and given its geographical position the parish welcomes people from each of those areas. Those who attend St Anne's faithfully, admit that they are refugees from other parishes and drive a long way to attend Mass. They feel very committed to the parish and wish to be involved.

There is a very active parish council and a proactive finance committee who make a conscious effort to care for the life of the parish and support Fr Teddy. It is an excellent model of co-responsibility.

Although this is a small parish, the parishioners are very active in the deanery, and there is always a group of parishioners from St. Anne's who attend the Deanery meetings for the laity and clergy. A group of parishioners had attended the first Deanery Pastoral Council, a few days prior to the visitation. There was a detailed report from a parishioner (Mr David McLoughlin) in the parish newsletter, describing the recent meeting. David summed up the Deanery's efforts, as 'seeking to do, what are doing'. That is not an inaccurate description.

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'*.

There is a very strong social life, which helps to foster a strong sense of community at St. Anne's. An enjoyable social evening was arranged on Saturday evening, and again on Sunday morning after Mass, when Canon Paul had the opportunity to meet the majority of the parishioners and discuss the life of the parish. This included members of the parish council, the finance committee and those who are involved in parish life in other ways.

There is a strong sense of co-responsibility and desire to support Fr Teddy and the mission of the parish. In this sense, this small parish community is vibrant.

Parish Masses and Liturgy

Masses are celebrated at Wappenbury and at Princethorpe on Sunday Morning. There are approx. 40 people at each of the Masses. Both Churches, while very different in character are very well cared for and are in excellent condition. The liturgy is celebrated well, with music at both Masses.

Affirmation of Parish Life

Although this is a small community, it is proactive, and concerned for all who attend Mass, and have made this parish their spiritual home. Several parishioners have deep connections with Princethorpe, as former pupils, families who have students there, or who have worked at the College in some capacity, or who have come under the influence of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

At St. Anne's, Fr Teddy and his welcoming community offers a warm welcome and parochial support. The parish have ensured that the presbytery and the Church are well cared for and are used to support and welcome the parish community. This is a vibrant parish, which is well cared for, by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Finally,

I should like to express my thanks to the parishioners of St Anne's and Fr Teddy O'Brien.

Canon Paul Fitzpatrick

22 April 2024