



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

PARISH VISITATION DEANERY OF BANBURY & WARWICK

Parish of St. Mary Immaculate, Warwick [204]

Parish of St Charles, Borromeo, Hampton on the Hill [112]

Visitor: Canon Paul Fitzpatrick

Parish Priest Fr. Patrick Mileham

Date of Visitation: 14/15 October 2023.

Summary of Visitation Activities:

Saturday 14 October 2023

Conversation with Fr Patrick Mileham.
Celebrate Mass: Saturday 6pm, at St. Mary Immaculate, Warwick.
Meeting with Parishioners after Mass.
Visit 'Catholic Corner' at the Post Office.

Sunday 19 February 2023

Celebrate Mass: Sunday 9.00am, St Charles Borromeo, Hampton on the Hill.
Meet Canon Ted Stewart.
Parish Meeting with parishioners after Mass
Celebrate Mass, Sunday 11am at St. Mary Immaculate, Warwick.
Meet with Parishioners after Mass in Parish Hall.
Meet with the Chair of Governors, of St. Mary Immaculate, Primary School.
Meeting with Parish Administrator. Andy Walker
Meeting with Fr Patrick Mileham.

A brief profile of the Parish.

St Charles Borromeo, Hampton on the Hill was founded 1804. Currently, Canon Ted Stewart is the priest in residence, where he has lived for the last 14 years, since retiring from Warwick. Mary Immaculate, Warwick was founded from Hampton on the Hill in 1860. Fr Patrick Mileham has been Parish Priest since 2017.

Over the last seven years, the fabric of the Church and the presbytery has been enhanced. A new efficient heating system has been placed in the Church, which also addresses the longer-term problems with the flaking paint on the roof.

Currently, the parish is focusing on upgrading the lightening protection. However, this may cost approx. £70,000. This will put plans for a Columbarium and the repainting of the Church on hold.

There are four icons of the Warwick Martyrs which have become a feature of devotion within the parish, and the wider ecumenical community. Two icons of the Warwick Martyrs, Bl. John Sugar & Bl. Robert Grissold have been purchased from the ecumenical St. Luke's icon school. Another two, Bl. William Freeman and Bl. Margaret Pole have been commissioned. Sr. Felicity is currently working on the icon of Bl. Margaret Pole.

There are very strong links across the wider Civic Community. Fr Patrick has a high profile across Warwick and is asked to lead several civic services at Christmas, Jewish Holocaust Memorial day, and throughout the year. During Lent, he celebrates a number of Station Masses at historic Churches and Chapels across the town.

As the Vice-Dean, Fr Patrick offers excellent leadership across the Warwick Cluster and within the Deanery generally.

The parish has an excellent website.

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'*.

Over the weekend, Canon Paul had several meetings with individual parishioners. They expressed their warmth for their Parish Priest and their support for the future of the parish. There are a larger number of younger families within the parish, than the deanery as a whole.

There are a number of opportunities for parishioners to play an active part in the life of the parish, with traditional outreach such as the SVP, Children's Liturgy and Food Bank. There are new approaches, such as a Book Club and Dining Club, which has broad support.

The Post Office (the local pub) is a meeting place for several younger parishioners, to the extent that a 'Catholic Corner' has been established with several Catholic images on the walls. Reviving the tradition of Archbishop Maurice, Canon Paul visited this fine hostelry during his visitation. There an interesting parish meeting took place.

The parishioners of St Charles Borromeo are very loyal and devoted members of a close-knit community. They take ownership (or Co-Responsibility) for the parish and have an active voice in its day-to-day life. Canon Ted Stewart is greatly loved by this community. They have a well provisioned Parish Hall, where parishioners were keen to meet Canon Paul, especially a number of refugees from Baddesley Clinton.

Canon Paul was pleased to meet with the Chair of Governors at Mary Immaculate Primary School. The issues which the school currently faces, is the lack of a full-time head. Rather they share an executive head from St. Joseph's, Whitnash. This arrangement seems to be working well at this time. The school is currently seeking to move from one form entry to one and a half form, which offers its own challenges.

Canon Paul also had a meeting with the parish administrator, Mr Andy Walker. He is a very capable administrator who has made the parish office, something of a parish hub. He is a great support for Fr Patrick. Andy Walker's talents may be of service to the Deanery as a whole, or the Warwick cluster.

Parish Masses and Liturgy

There are three Parish Masses, in two Churches.

St Charles Borromeo, Hampton on the Hill, is well served by Canon Ted Stewart, who assists Fr Patrick Mileham. With over 40 parishioners at Mass, it is well attended. The Church is very fine, and well cared for.

St. Mary Immaculate, Warwick, needs a little TLC, but has been enhanced by the new heating system. There are a number of very capable servers, and the liturgy and preaching is of a very high standard.

The Church is half full, on Saturday evening, and standing room only on Sunday. The Sunday Mass is notable for its fine choir and soloists, as well as those who sing pieces from other ethnic communities, in other languages. There is a great diversity of languages and ethnic backgrounds, as well as age. It is notable for the number of young families at Mass.

Affirmation of Parish Life

St. Mary Immaculate and St. Charles Borromeo are very different parish communities. However, each has a vibrancy and life which is appropriate to its setting. Fr Patrick has enhanced the Liturgical and Spiritual life of the parish, as well as its Communion and Mission. The parishes have a strong sense of Co-Responsibility and are active in the wider civic and ecumenical communities.

Finally,

I should like to express my thanks to Fr Patrick Mileham for making me so welcome.

Canon Paul Fitzpatrick

19 October 2023