

A few words from the Vicarage ...



At the invitation of Lord Shuttleworth, the Lord Lieutenant, four of us from St Paul's attended Blackburn Cathedral for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee service – and a wonderful occasion it was. The Dean read out a very warm message from Her Majesty and we were treated to a real celebration of what has been an amazing 60 years' reign.

We now await our own Diamond Jubilee celebration in the form of a Parish barbecue on the afternoon of Sunday, 3rd June and I hope that this will be an equally memorable occasion. Attendance is open to all and there is no charge – it is a simple act of sharing and celebration from which no one is excluded. Should the weather conspire against us, we will simply meet in the hall – otherwise, the church grounds will hopefully be awash with friends, neighbours and families as we give thanks for this remarkable achievement by our monarch.

This is also a time for looking forward as we kick-start our review of the Parish's Mission Action Plan (MAP). Whilst we are still in the early stages, I do hope that you will all give much thought to what we ought to be considering in terms of moving forward, developing and growing as a parish. None of us can afford to remain static or navel gazing – we need to consider what is our Christian purpose, mission and outreach and we need to MAP out with clarity and vision if we are to achieve whatever targets we set for ourselves.

In order to be successful in this process, we need everyone to participate as fully as possible – I don't want to hear anyone say that they are not involved, not needed or their opinion isn't important. Equally, at the end of the process, I don't want to hear

anyone say that they weren't asked or that they'd had no opportunity to put their ideas forward!

Of course, the 'end of the process' will be just the beginning of the journey as the MAP will need to be both flexible and self-renewing as we meet new challenges and opportunities.

Having mentioned one Queen and her 60 years' reign, we are about to see the commencement of our own Rose Queen's one-year reign – Siân Thompson is soon to be crowned as part of Lytham Club Day and we wish her, and all her attendants and retinue, every joy and pleasure in this. The whole group supporting this process has worked tirelessly and we are in their debt for this magnificent effort. It has been a delight to see Siân develop into her role and, with your support she will, I'm sure, be a wonderful ambassador for the church at large and not simply for St Paul's.

In this Olympic year and with the Open Golf Championship on our doorstep, we will meet challenges and opportunities all the time, I am sure. As we welcome the Olympic torch as it passes through the parish and, as we welcome the leading golfers from across the globe (along with the world's media), we give thanks for these opportunities and ask for God's guidance in how we deal with them. As each day offers fresh openings for us, we seek God's help as we articulate and share our faith with others.

We may not win a Gold Medal, a Claret Jug or achieve a place on a winners' podium for our efforts – our prize is much more valuable than these, our prize is an assured place in glory.

God bless you all,

Your Vicar,

Fr D.