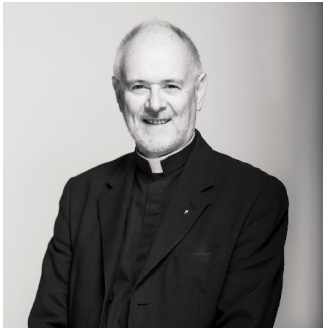


## A few words from the Vicarage ...



Normal service has now been resumed! After our brief sortie into the hall for services, with the new boilers installed, we are able to return to what passes as normal by being back *home* in church - our truly spiritual home. Thanks to everyone for your forbearance while the work was going on.

It had been hoped that this would see the beginning of a period of stability in terms of major works and a time of growth as we concentrate our efforts on things spiritual rather than on things material. Whilst we are responsible for the buildings and its surroundings to ensure that they are fit for purpose, we also need to focus upon maintaining our lives to ensure that they too are fit for purpose.

That purpose is to serve - after all, Christ himself came to serve, not to be served.

So, we seek to look forward - with our APCM looming large (on Palm Sunday) and the question must be asked of each and every person - are you ready to serve? Is there something you are able to offer to this church family in a way that will serve God's purpose and God's people? Ask yourself that question and answer it truthfully.

It has been part of our Mission Action Plan to seek growth - what have you done to further this plan? Ask yourself that question and answer it truthfully. If the answer is nothing positive, then ask yourself why that should be.

If the church is to grow, if it is to remain relevant to the people of today and of tomorrow, we cannot simply rely upon others to do the work for us - it is our Christian duty to do our utmost to garner that growth and build upon all that has been done in the past. Material projects are all well and good, new lights, refurbished organ, redecorated hall, new curtains, resurfaced car park, new boilers - all of which are hugely worthy for what they are but if they don't help us to grow as disciples for Jesus they are meaningless.

None of us is in this for the material comforts - at least we ought not to be - but there are further costs ahead following the recent architect's inspection of the church plant; costs which have yet to be quantified and work which will need to be prioritised - yet another task for someone to manage through service.

However, whilst we deal with all of that as best we can, we need to ensure that we do not forget our mission which is to spread the Gospel - that, above all else, must be our primary focus. We must remember that, whilst the buildings are important, the church is its people not its bricks and mortar.

With this in mind, we look forward to our Easter preparations with Lent on the horizon. Following the success of our Advent course, this year there is to be a Lent course beginning on Monday, 10th March and running for five weeks in all on successive Monday evenings. These courses are designed to help us to grow in our understanding and commitment to serve one another. It is hoped that as many as possible will take advantage of this course amidst the busy schedules we all have.

It is yet again a call upon you to make time for God, perhaps as part of your Lenten discipline.

Are you prepared to discipline yourself in such a way that you can develop and grow through sharing the Gospel with others? Ask yourself that question and answer it truthfully.

Whether you attend a Lent course or offer yourself for service of one sort or another at the APCM, that is for you and you alone to decide - but at least ask yourself the questions, and answer them truthfully.

God bless you all,  
your Vicar,  
Fr D.