

## A few words from the Vicarage ...



At long last, we have in place our new Bishop of Blackburn, following Bishop Julian's consecration which took place in York Minster on Thursday, 10th October – and a splendid service it was. His inauguration, which saw †Julian him firmly established in the Diocese, was held in Blackburn Cathedral on Saturday, 19th.

So, we welcome warmly our new Bishop and look forward to his ministry among us – this welcome is extended to his wife Heather, and our prayers are for both as they settle into their new life – a far cry from their previous life in the archdeaconry of Dorking in the Guildford Diocese.

We also give thanks for the work carried out by Bishop John, who has been Acting Bishop of Blackburn during the Vacancy in See, and we pray for him and Bishop Geoff as they resume normal service with a new man at the sharp end of Diocesan life.

Changes of such importance always come with risks, of course, and we must expect things to change and need to be receptive to whatever our new Bishop has in mind for our development and growth. Of course, we continually seek to develop and grow – as witnessed by our commitment to our own Mission Action Plan. It is essential that we seek new and exciting opportunities if we are to succeed in our mission, a mission charged to us when we took our confirmation vows.

Many people have a skewed view on mission – that it is some new-fangled buzz-word made up to stir our emotions. This is far from true and is to misunderstand mission – we have always been about mission, it is what our faith demands of us – to spread the Good News of Christ and draw others to Him.

What is new is the way we need go about it, we can no longer rely upon the old ways in which families came to church each Sunday, attending and supporting all church events, before passing on this tradition from parent to child. The world has moved on and the church needs to change with the times – it needs to explore new ways of meeting the needs of those who don't fit into that old way. Through our MAP process, this is what we seek to achieve – we seek to meet those needs through mission.

At our recent parish meeting on this subject it was agreed to trial a few innovative and exciting ideas – the first of these is planned for Sunday, 3rd November when, following the 10.30 service, an opportunity will be given to discuss the Lectionary readings and sermon for the day. It is hoped that this will encourage interactive dialogue and engagement with scripture and I hope that everyone will take and enjoy this opportunity.

Following on from that, there is being planned a four weeks Advent Course – the decision as to where and when this will be held will be made once it is known how many people wish to participate. Other ideas and projects are in the pipeline and I am hugely appreciative of the work, commitment and enthusiasm of all concerned – though there is still room for more to come on board.

Without a 'map', we can lose our way on our journey; without MAP, we can lose our way in our Christian mission. So, let us journey forward together with a clear idea of our route for that mission.

God bless you all,

Your Vicar,

Fr D.