

# Gloucester Catholic Deanery News

January 2010

## The Founder of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God—SMG's



Frances Taylor (1832-1900) was the daughter of an Anglican Vicar. From her mother she inherited a great love for the poor. In 1854 she joined Miss Nightingale's lady volunteer nurses to the Crimea, and this experience changed the course of her life. Her contact with the Irish Sisters of Mercy, her admiration for the vivid faith of the Irish soldiers led to her reception into the Catholic Church.

On her return home she devoted herself to the service of the poor and soon saw the need for a new organisation to help them. Gradually other women joined her, and in 1869 with the blessing of Cardinal Manning a new Congregation –the Poor Servants of the Mother of God (SMG's) came into being.

The Sisters worked in the most deprived areas of London. Frances, now Mother Magdalen, wished her Sisters to see Christ in the persons of the poor, giving them a sense of their dignity, since “we all alike, have one hope, one end, one Master who is Christ” Mother Magdalen's vision continues to inspire her Sisters and the poor are served in ways most appropriate to our societies and cultures.

Bishop Declan said

I would like to thank the Sisters for the generous way in which they have supported and enabled the development of education and parish life in Gloucester since their arrival in the city in 1937. I am sure they will be missed by many people who have been affected by their prayers and work over the years both within the Catholic community and the wider community in the City. Please remember us in your prayers as we will remember you.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January saw Canon Bernard Massey the Dean of Gloucester and the Parish

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## A People of Hope..... That's us!

There will be a deanery evening on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January beginning at 7:30pm at Saint Augustine's, Matson. The evening will begin with a time of prayer.

This will be followed by a talk by Julian Dowle who will present a vision of a parish where lay people are encouraged to 'dream dreams' and work together with their Parish Priest and clergy to celebrate liturgy, to care for the sick and needy, to grow in understanding and to enjoy each other's company. We will then have a shared supper (so please bring a plate of food). Everyone is welcome, especially those who are interested in taking more responsibility for the pastoral welfare of our parishes and deanery. It is particularly hoped that members of the Parish Pastoral Councils and Deanery Pastoral Council will be there. It will be an opportunity to pray together, to get to know each other and to be encouraged in the work of the Church (including our sometimes drab parish council meetings!).



# Saint Augustine's & English Martyrs

January 2010

Our celebration of Christmas went very well, and this was the first of the most major feasts of the Church's year we have celebrated with Father Gary as the priest for both communities. The *Prepare the Way for the Lord* celebration on the last Sunday of Advent helped us look forward to the coming festivities with readings, carols and a Nativity play performed by some of our younger people entitled *The Innkeeper's Breakfast*.

There were five Christmas Masses with a vigil Mass in each parish (the English Martyrs one was preceded by a carol service with three short performances by some of the younger children), Midnight Mass at Saint Augustine's and then a morning Mass in each parish. The Octave of Christmas was completed with a 12:00 noon Mass on New Year's Day to celebrate Mary, Mother of God.

Our two parishes look forward to 2010, confident about the future. We are looking forward to the visit of Bishop Declan in June to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. The preparation programme begins at 6:30pm on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January in Saint Augustine's Hall.

One of the saddest aspects of the New Year is the imminent departure of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God from Gloucester, which for Saint Augustine's also means that Sister Marian will be moving to a parish near London. After over 12 years of service in the parish she will be missed, and among those who should be particularly grateful to her are the many elderly and housebound she has visited over the years and the young people she has had a key part in helping on their journey towards the Sacrament of Confirmation. Her presence and her ministry have helped to make Saint Augustine's the vibrant and caring parish that it is.

There will be a special Farewell Mass for her on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January at 11:00am followed by a buffet lunch in the Parish Hall.

## News from the Forest

We have had 3 lots of snow to date, making travel difficult. Christmas numbers were down. However, Christmas was good-next year it will be on a Saturday and the following year on the Sunday! I guess what made Christmas good this year was the involvement of many people. Church cleaning and decorating, the music, mince pies etc after the two vigil masses and much more. This was Fr Barnabas' 3<sup>rd</sup> year and the teams in the 4 churches are growing. A new priest will always disturb the existing status quo- a bit like a fox in the hen house!

In Coleford we even managed a successful Ecumenical Advent Service. You know how hard it is to get Catholics to support United Services-probably because we were forbidden to join in for many years. But we were able to provide Readers, Musicians and our own fair share of attendees. A talented Anglican curate got together a music group from the 5 churches. Advent carols, no sermon but readings and reflections on the birth of Christ.

Getting together with the other Churches seems easier in a country Parish. Out here we are involved in 3 Churches Together. Nothing earth shattering but good relations building the beginnings of trust and understanding. Fr Barnabas gave 2 talks in the Autumn to the local Methodist Church on the Communion of Saints and then on Praying to Mary.

It's a strange world when you can't get Catholics to come to talks on their faith but-you can get Methodists!

# MBE for Fr George Robson



Fr George Robson pictured in 2007

Fr George Robson has been awarded an MBE in the 2010 New Years honours list.

The entry reads:

*The Reverend Father George Edward ROBSON Chairman, North Huyton New Deal for Communities Board.*

*For services to the community in Merseyside.*

Fr George prepared the following statement when he heard of the award:

My first contact with Merseyside was four years of teaching Physics at the then recently opened Salesian College in Bootle (now Savio High School) from 1966 to 1970. I joined the Salesians of Don Bosco in 1952 and was ordained a priest in 1963.

I then worked as a priest and teacher in other parts of the country until I was appointed to St Dominic's Parish in Huyton in 1991. I have been very happy to work in this part of Merseyside ever since.

I see the major part of any *services to the community in Merseyside* as being linked to my role as Parish Priest in St Dominic's. While the primary focus is on the local catholic community, I have always tried to be involved with other local churches and with the wider community. Work in the parish has always involved working in collaboration with members of the congregation and this has always been a source of encouragement and support.

I have served as Governor in the local Catholic Schools and for a number of years was a member of the Education Committee of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough. I was involved in Community Participation initiatives in a project called *Community of the 21st Century* which was led by the head teachers of St Dominic's Infant and Junior Schools and St Edmund of Canterbury High School. This led to my being involved in the SRB initiative in Huyton and then in the New Deal Community project for North Huyton. I was asked to be Chair of the Shadow Board leading up to the acceptance of the Community Plan and from then as Chair of the Board of North Huyton New Deal New Future (NHNDNF).

I accept the honour in the name of the many others with whom I have been associated over the years. In particular I associate myself with the Resident and other Directors of the NHNDNF Board and the officers and very many community members who have generously given of their time, experience and energy to bring about the success of the project to date. I am sure we will be able to continue to build on this for the future of the people of the area.

The capital projects that will contribute to the well being of residents and in which the New Deal for Communities Board have been involved include the new Health Centre, the Christ the King Centre for Learning, the Huyton Churches Training Service building, the Youth Centre attached to the River Alt Resource Centre and the proposed new Primary School. The NHNDNF project has made a substantial contribution to improvement in education and health and to community cohesion and well being. We hope that the housing project will weather the storm of the credit crunch and go on to be a very successful collaboration with Knowsley Borough Council and Knowsley Housing Trust and with Revive.

Our Lady of Lourdes Newent & St Michael's Blaisdon

Busily preparing for the Celebration in February, of the Golden Jubilee of the opening of the Church of Our Lady or Lourdes together with the Re-Dedication of the Church following extensive refurbishment.

Men's Breakfast Sat. 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan.

Ecumenical breakfast Sat. 30<sup>th</sup> Jan.

# Our Lady's Churchdown

OUR LADY'S JUSTICE & PEACE GROUP is organising a sleep out at the next Big (Small) Sleep out. This involves wrapping up warm and sleeping in St Mary's School playground from 11pm until 6am. The money raised will be used for homeless charities in Gloucester. PLEASE give your name to Father Kevin or Judy 535826 if you would like to be involved, even as a helper rather than sleeping out. We need supervisors on duty for a couple of hours each. Thanks!

## The BIG SLEEPOUT

**Simon Cowell won't be there! However YOU can be!**  
**If you are over 16 yrs old and want to help highlight homelessness**  
 Join the sponsored sleep out and raise money and awareness in Gloucester.

WHEN: Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010.  
 WHERE: St. Mary's School, Churchdown.  
 WHAT DO I DO? Sign up for a Sponsor Form. (Min amount £5) after Mass or e-mail Fr. Kevin [ourladys.churchdown@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:ourladys.churchdown@cliftondiocese.com)

UNDER 18s NEED PARENTAL CONSENT.

Please consider sponsoring others if you don't wish to sleep out yourself.



**Our Lady's Parish, Churchdown**, runs a group for young people year 7 and above. The group called Youth Café meet fortnightly. Come along to learn about your faith, make new friends and have fun. Starting on Sunday January 24<sup>th</sup> from 5pm-6.30pm we will begin looking at 6 DVD's produced for young people to help them enjoy and understand their Faith, featuring Fr Stan Fortuna the rapping priest. The DVD 's are called **Plugged in-** <http://www.youthcafe.org/> Contact Fr Kevin for More info- 713254

### Diocesan prayer

*'God our father open the horizons of our minds and hearts  
 so that we can see what hope your call holds for us.*

*Pour out the overflowing gifts of your Spirit so that we, your Church,  
 may become a people of hope for our world.*

*We ask you this, through Jesus Christ Our Lord,  
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 one God for ever and ever.*

*our lady Woman of Hope, pray for us*

*St Peter Rock of Hope, pray for us*

*St Paul Apostle of Hope, pray for us"*

Priest of St Peter's as the main celebrant at the Mass in St Peter's London Rd. This special Mass was attended not only by a number of present and past clergy of the diocese but also by members of the SMG congregation from around the country.

They all came together to thank God for the witness that the Poor Servants of the Mother of God had given to countless thousands of people in over 70 years of service to the people of Gloucester. The timing of the Mass for midday allowed a number of people to travel long distances in the daylight and attend this special farewell.

In the evening at 7.00 in St Peter's Parish Centre there was a special party with a generous supply of food and drink so they people of all ages could chat and laugh and enjoy themselves and make sure that 'Our Sisters' had a send off to remember. Part of the hallmark of the SMG's in the parish over the years has to have been adaptable to the changing needs of the city. In their early years it was chiefly in the field of education at both St Peter's Primary and Secondary schools. And whilst they were considered firm in their standards they were always very fair in its application. As times and needs have changed the role they have undertaken in both St Augustine's and St Peter's has been far more pastoral with much time taken up with the sick, the lonely and the housebound; as well as been great supporters of the local clergy.

The roles they have undertaken will be hard to fill but the model of service which they leave in our parishes and our Deanery should be a source of inspiration for all. They came to Gloucester to help build the Kingdom of God and the foundation stones have left will be a great help to all of us as we continue to respond to the changing needs of our parishes in the coming years.

We wish them every blessing for the future and acknowledge that Gloucester has been a better place because of the presence of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God.

## St. Joseph's Tewkesbury

**CUMBRIA FLOOD RELIEF:** The parishioners at St Joseph's Tewkesbury know only too well what it is like to have your town flooded, many of our parishioners homes were flooded during the 2007 floods and it was as much as a year before many of them were able to return to them. So following the recent floods in Cockermouth it was decided to raise funds to send to the people of St. Joseph's Church in that town. There was a collection after each Sunday Masses on two weekends during Advent which was well supported. The parish made up the difference and a cheque for £3000 was forwarded to the Parish Priest at St. Joseph's .

**WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON CLUB:** The monthly club members held their Christmas lunch on the first Wednesday in December. It was the first time since the new Narthex was built to share a hot meal together. About 30 people had booked to attend the meal. Half a dozen ladies had prepared the four course meal in their homes and brought it to the Narthex piping hot and ready to serve.

Father Christmas (Father Richard ) was present and handed out the raffle prizes.

**CLUSTERING OF LOCAL CHURCHES:** The Christmas lunch was a good opportunity for the two parishes who are close to us geographically to join us. With the clustering of the churches we are trying to work closely with St. Nicholas, Winchcombe & Bishop Cleeve and St Benet, Kemerton . So it was lovely that both Fr Peter and Fr. Francis joined us for the meal. Hopefully many of their parishioners will be able to share events together with us in the future.

The three parishes came together for the Reconciliation Service which took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> December at St Joseph's, about forty people were present with the three parish Priests. Following the service there was a party to celebrate Reconciliation and gave us all the chance to get to know each other.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> January we restart our bible study group when we will watching the video of Scott Hahn's 'The Lambs Supper'.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> Candlemass we are going to celebrate this event with a bring and share supper after Mass instead of having an Epiphany party.

