

Dear Friends and Parishioners of St Edward's Parish, Milton Keynes,

God can speak through a letter! Letter-writing has always been an important activity in the Christian tradition as a way for missionaries to build a relationship with communities that lie some distance away. We all know of St Paul's letters to the Christian communities in Rome and Corinth and elsewhere. These letters are considered to be so alive with the Spirit that in all places and for all time we refer to them as "The Word of the Lord."

God is at work in our lives. My purpose is less grand but, nevertheless, I feel that my visit to the parish of St Edward's is very important both for me and for you. I understand that in all the complexities of life, God is at work leading us and guiding us into new situations to meet with new people, and that our encounters with each other are of remarkable significance when perceived through the eyes of faith.

I want to encourage you. I would like to use the opportunity of this letter to encourage you as a parish, and as individuals, to make the most of the time of mission. I will do this by reflecting on certain realities that I would like to bring to your attention.

- **God's nature and character.** First of all let us be clear that God is loving and personal, intelligent and holy, faithful and committed. We can be in no doubt as to these qualities and characteristics of God's nature as expressed to us in the Scriptures, and particularly through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.
- **God's desire is to help us to achieve happiness.** From this understanding of who God is, we can begin to grasp something of how he wishes to be involved in our personal lives and in the life of our families and communities. God has created us for himself, and does not want to see us struggling through all kinds of difficulties without his wisdom and strength being available to us.
- **The amazing gift.** God's divine, or supernatural, help comes to us through the amazing gift of faith of which we have all received a seed in our baptism. I don't know how *you* hear or understand the word *faith*, but we need to understand that it is something alive and capable of development. Faith can grow more astonishingly than the way in which a caterpillar develops into a butterfly!
- **A best friend.** This life of faith is something that must be discovered personally. It can only be experienced from the 'inside.' It is a guaranteed find for all those who seek it out. It is a grace which brings meaning and purpose to our lives. We become a best friend of him who is loving and personal, intelligent and holy, faithful and committed.
- **Danger.** There is always the possibility and danger that this most mysterious and fulfilling of all relationships can be hijacked, arrested in its development, or never be fully appropriated and realised. What might the reasons be for this?
- **The seed of sin.** The Scriptures give us a comprehensive view of how God invites us to come to him, but they also present a sober account of human resistance. We are taught that we have, each of us, inherited the seed of sin which itself wishes to take root in our lives. Like the seed of baptism this seed is also striving to develop within us bringing about a growth which is alien to God's plans and purposes.
- **Life without God.** Sin leads us into a world where our own concerns and desires dominate our lives. The happiness of relationship with God and his family seems unattractive and even threatening. We find it more difficult to identify the reality of non-life-giving temptation as it lies hidden among the myriad desires of our hearts. Our power to live for others becomes weakened. We reduce our understanding of happiness to the achievement of earthbound goals and personal comforts.
- **Moments of opportunity.** There are moments in our lives in which God sees his opportunity to make his presence felt. Sometimes, these can be moments of great joy when we experience the sheer gift of all that we are and all that there is. At other times, we cry out to God in a moment of personal or collective desperation. There is also the moment of mission.

The parish mission. A parish mission is first and foremost an opportunity granted to us by God's providence. The God who is loving and personal, intelligent and holy, faithful and committed makes a move. In faith, we are waiting for him; and this waiting is not passive. We are opening our hearts in prayer and expectation; we are not held back by the fear of possible disappointment. If we aren't waiting for the Lord then who or what are we waiting for? If we think a win on the Lotto might be more beneficial for us, then faith is yet to accomplish its work of miracle within us.

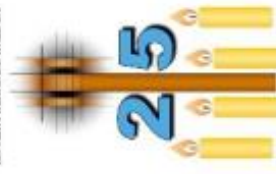
God never comes by force. God is loving and personal, intelligent and holy, faithful and committed. He never lets anyone down but he never forces himself upon us. God's action in our lives is so powerful that he wants to be absolutely sure that he is welcome and that he has permission to be at work in us and among us. Let's make it known to him that we are ready!

A precious time. I'm so looking forward to being with you all during this precious time of mission when we gather in the Spirit to pray for God's blessing on our personal lives and on the parish community. **This is my request to you:** that you engage with the mission as much as you are able from a sincere desire in the heart to be open to God. Come along to as many of the various Masses, services, events, gatherings, and prayer times as you can manage. Let us go that extra mile for the Lord!

A prayer. *Lord, be with me and all the Sion Community team as we join together in prayer and action with the parish of St Edward's to bring about a new experience of your Kingdom as we enter into our time of mission.*

Fr Ged Kelly
Sion Community Mission Priest

Please turn over for information on what the services in Week 2 will cover. The Sion Mission marks the 25th anniversary for St. Edward's. Join in and together, we will enjoy an opportunity to continue to grow in faith.



Interested in exploring matters integral to the Catholic Faith?



COME TO ST EDWARD'S SION MISSION SERVICES AND FIND OUT MORE

🏛️ **Where: St Edward the Confessor, Shenley Church End**
🕒 **When: 7:30-8:30pm**

Ask questions, explore your faith and enjoy your community!

I learn most from answering questions because it forces me to do my homework. So please ask questions! Source: Wilson Mar

<p>Monday, 18 April 7:30-8:30pm THE FATHER</p> <p>'I know well the plans I have in mind for you. Plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.'</p> <p>Jeremiah 29:11</p> 	<p>Tuesday, 19 April 7:30-8:30pm THE SON</p> <p>'For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everybody who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life.'</p> <p>John 3:16</p> 	<p>Wednesday, 20 April 7:30-8:30pm RECONCILIATION</p> <p>'Teacher, they said to Jesus... Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.'</p> <p>John 8:4-12</p> 	<p>Thursday, 21 April 7:30-8:30pm THE SPIRIT</p> <p>'There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit...'</p> <p>1 Corinthians 12:4-11</p> 	<p>Friday, 22 April 7:30-8:30pm CHURCH</p> <p>'For even as the Body is one...'</p> <p>1 Corinthians 12:12-30</p> 
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After each service, please join us for some fellowship, goodwill and refreshments.

John 16:12-13: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." Source: catholicbible101.com/theholyltrinity

✠ **St Edward the Confessor Catholic Church**, Burchard Crescent, Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes MK5 6DX ☎ **Parish Priest: Fr. Paul Hardy**
W) www.saintedwards.org.uk E) mission2016@saintedwards.org.uk