

PORTSMOUTH contd.....

Corpus Christie Foundation, Boscombe, Bournemouth.

ON Saturday 26 April 2008 we celebrated our 70th anniversary. Our Parish Priest, Fr Denis Blackledge SJ, concelebrated Mass at noon with Father Peter Hackett SJ and Fr Jozef Gruszkiewicz UCM Spiritual Director Portsmouth diocese.

It was well supported By UCM past and present members and guests from Portsmouth and Plymouth dioceses, approximately one hundred attended. A buffet in the parish hall followed which was greatly enjoyed. It was an opportunity for old friends and new to meet and exchange conversation. A raffle was held and the proceeds given to HCPT. After cutting our blue and white celebratory cake our Diocesan President, Maureen Meacher, addressed the gathering. The junior dancers from The Janet Durham School of Irish Dancing entertained us. We all realised the importance of the UCM and our 70th anniversary was a very memorable occasion.

Bridie Rocks President Corpus Christie



L to R Fr Jozef, Bridie Rocks Fr Denis and Maureen Meacher

SHREWSBURY

PARISH PILGRIMAGE to ROME

Fr O'Doherty parish priest of St Mary's Church in Dukinfield took a party of 32 parishioners, including 8 UCM members, on a seven-day parish pilgrimage to Rome. Besides Rome we also visited Florence, Assisi and Sienna. A Papal Audience had been booked for the group but unfortunately the Pope was in Brazil at the time of our visit. However everyone in our party received a Papal Blessing.

On our return we set up an exhibition at the back of the church with pictures and details of places visited for the rest of our parishioners to see and help share in some way the wonderful experience we had enjoyed.

We are now planning our 2008 trip!

Mrs Maureen Constantine, Secretary, St Mary's Foundation, Dukinfield

Ecumenical Support for Operation Christmas Child

This is the third consecutive year that the Malpas community and Churches have united in supporting underprivileged children through the Operation Christmas Child Project.

More than 130 shoeboxes were filled with gifts, toiletries, toys and sweets to be distributed to poor and needy children in Belarus, Serbia and Romania. These shoebox gifts provide these children with such intense joy and happiness whilst letting them know that they are not forgotten at Christmas time. Apparently the 2007 appeal has broken all records for shoeboxes with over 1.25 million received. A tremendous achievement by everyone involved!

Marian Hughes, Diocesan Media Officer

Thank You

Following my recent motorway accident I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all members for the expressions of sympathy, kindness and the numerous Mass cards received together with prayers said for my recovery. I am pleased to say that I am 'on the mend'.

Betty Young, St Joseph's Malpas

St Mary's Duckinfield

During a Mass celebrated by Parish Priest Fr O'Doherty and Spiritual Director Fr Michael Murray, several members of St Mary's Foundation were presented with 25 year membership certificates. Diocesan President, Pat O'Connor attended the service and then joined members for refreshments and celebrations.



PLYMOUTH

AGM

THIS year our AGM was held on the 14 April, at our host Foundation Exmouth. Our President Maureen Downes began by thanking everyone for attending especially those who had travelled a long way. We were also very privileged to have our National President Maureen McVann attending, who gave us a very well received talk about her duties, travels and the work carried out by the National Officers. She is very involved with recruitment and the opening of new foundations. Maureen McVann finished by urging the Members at the meeting to look back on our successes and achievements and to look forward with hope.

From April 2009 it is proposed that the Parishes of Kinson and Ensburry will merge. This will cause logistical problems for the two Foundations, Maureen McVann has suggested that the two Foundations talk to the Parish Priest and she herself will seek guidance from Bishop Brain.

This year we have two new elected new Officers as Maureen Downes stepped down as our President. During her time as President,

Maureen has done sterling work for the Plymouth Diocese UCM, with her support for many of the events we ask her to attend and representing us at National, once again we thank you Maureen. Colette Bolton our Treasurer felt unable to carry on with the Treasurers role, which she has done for many years, again another thanks for all your hard work. Colette had then been presented with an inscribed vase.

Election of Officers:- Barbara Rogers – Diocesan President, Halina Marczyk – Treasurer, Deanna Nolan was re-elected as Secretary.

The meeting was closed with a vote of thanks to the National President and to Sheila Bennett and her team from Exmouth who made us welcome and provided us with a wonderful cream tea.

Prior to our AGM we attended Mass at the Church of the Holy Ghost this was celebrated by Canon John Deeny.

Several Mothers from the Foundation will be attending the Pilgrimage to Walsingham this year

Caroline Mills Diocesan Media Officer

SOUTHWARK

St Joseph's Borough Green Kent

WE have been busy fund raising for charities including: The Catholic Children's Society, Demelza House Hospice for Children, Water Aid, CAFOD, Fr Pratap's Fund in India, and Father Kenneth's family in Nigeria. One particular local charity has benefited from our continued practical and financial input as over the last three years our members, together with the help of local villagers have been raising funds and knitting for the Christina Noble Children's Foundation.

This supports the street children of Vietnam and Mongolia. In the early summer a parcel containing 150 hats, 20 jumpers and scarves plus eight blankets were sent to Mongolia. Many street children live in sewers to protect themselves from the cold temperatures, which can drop to -30C, and other families live in cardboard boxes under stairwells. CNCF are currently working to provide a Ger Village. The Ger is a sturdy tent construction covered in felt and provides a family with a home so enabling them to be more independent and giving them dignity. Recently we held a quiz evening and were delighted to be able to send £450, the cost of a furnished Ger.

Margaret Carter

Jenny Gyles and Prerria Raj walked eight miles in aid of St Christophers Hospice and raised £790.

Westgate Foundation's project this year was the Apostleship of the Sea. Rev John Slater handed over a cheque for £600 to Mrs Sheila Bailey, Director Fundraising and Communications (AOS).

**Tolworth Foundation**

IT was with sadness that the members said farewell to Mary Thomas as she moved with her husband Michael to Devon. A member for forty years and a teacher at Our Lady Immaculate Primary School she assisted with meals for the elderly and, with her husband, helped organise aid to children in Romania. She was a fine cake maker and over the years produced dozens for the UCM cake sale in aid of the Parish Project. Whatever the event Mary was among the first to volunteer, among the first to arrive and the last to leave. Her greatest quality was her enthusiasm. She was on the committee and was President for many years. At the last Diocesan AGM, Father Nolan said members have a responsibility to ensure the succession of their Foundations. Mary did this above all Thank you Mary, we shall miss you. We wish you and Michael every happiness in your new home in Budleigh Salterton.

SALFORD

St Mary and St Philip Neri, Radcliffe.

More than a hundred ladies attended the UCM annual social evening on 23 April. The theme was St George's Day and all our members were dressed in white T-shirts with red Crosses. The room as decorated with flags, bunting and balloons. An organist and drummer who played a variety of dance music entertained us and we had an excellent singer, Kathy Ferguson. After supper it was our turn to do our bit and we sang Prom songs, like Jerusalem, and Rule Britannia and Kathy sang the lead part. The raffle prizes were wrapped in white paper with St George's cross painted on. During the evening Hilda Stratton received her 50-year certificate, which was a complete surprise to her. The evening was a great success and enjoyed by all..

St Luke's Salford

IN FEBRUARY 10 parishioners (including four UCM members) from St Luke's Salford, visited Fr Joseph Jeyarai in India. Fr Joseph was at St Luke's for two years while he was taking a degree at Salford University. He is now Rector of the Don Bosco Animation Centre in Ennore, Chennai (Formerly Madras). St Luke's have started an organisation to raise money to help Fr Joseph's work in India. This money not only helps Fr Joseph's centre but also an old peoples home for destitute people and people from the mountain villages. We were taken to a village in the mountains where a small Don Bosco school has been built. Due to the long distances the children have to travel to reach the school they board from Monday to Saturday. Fr Joseph will now fund the food for this school.

In Chennai we visited the Cathedral of St Thomas, which is built over the tomb of St Thomas the Apostle and where a relic of St Thomas is on view. We also travelled many miles to Velankanni to visit the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Health. This shrine is the 'Lour-



Mountain Village School

des' of India and many miracles have taken place there. Our Lady had first appeared to a Hindu boy, but it was Portuguese sailors in the 17th century who were sailing from China to Colombo and were caught up in a storm in the Bay of Bengal who put up a chapel in Velankanni. The sailors had vowed to build a chapel in the name of the Virgin Mary wherever they could reach safety.

The legend claims the sea became calm and they reached the shores of Velankanni on 8 September, Our Lady's birthday. Each year in September millions of pilgrims from all over India and abroad and of different faiths visit the shrine.

We visited a Hindu Ashram (religious retreat) in Pondicherry and after an overnight stay in Tanjore visited two Hindu temples – one in Tanjore and the other in Trichy. We spent a lovely relaxing evening with Father Joseph visiting his large family. Wherever we went we were treated with such friendship and hospitality and the experience is something we will remember always.

The day before we left was Fr Joseph's birthday and the celebrations began with five priests concelebrating Mass, followed by a meal and in the evening the night school children from the centre entertained us. Reluctantly we left the next morning but took with us some amazing memories.

WESTMINSTER

Impressions of Rome April 2007

Last Easter, 2007, I was privileged to visit Rome with my usual group. It is somewhat presumptuous to write about Rome in this newspaper as I know that Rome has been, and still is, the spiritual home of so many UCM members. However, I'd like to share with everyone two marvellous experiences.

The first was participating in a public audience with Pope Benedict XVI, on Wednesday 11th April on a brilliant spring morning.

As our hotel was virtually next to St Peter's Basilica, it was a hub of activity from the crack of

dawn as quite a crowd had 'overnighted' there! The Swiss guards, resplendent in their uniform, controlled the crowds with ease. I had instant access as I was in a wheelchair. Soon, thousands were seated and the atmosphere was electric while we listened to music from several choirs.

At 10.25 the Pope's helicopter flew overhead and he arrived in his 'popemobile' at 10.30 amidst applause. He addressed the assembly in Latin and gave a sermon in English, French, German and Italian. Before each sermon a priest named the groups present who yelled and cheered and youngsters

seemed to be in the majority. After he had finished, the wheelchair group was lined up and as he left he blessed and acknowledged them. The applause was deafening. This was an experience to be treasured forever.

The second was an evening of operatic arias sung by popular opera singers. The venue was Sao Paulo, an ornate Anglican church in the vicinity. The performance was light-hearted and the renditions of Verdi's La Donna e Mobile from Il Rigoletto and Habanera from Bizet's Carmen were my favourites.

I returned to the U.K. with a feeling of elation.

Theo Osborne Westminster

Our Lady and St Joseph Foundation, Kingsland

OUR Lady and St Joseph Foundation Kingsland, entertained over 100 people at their senior citizens Christmas Dinner. A good time was had by all.



Please note: Deadline date for items for inclusion in the Autumn (Sep.) edition of the Catholic Mother is the 11 August
Names for *Eternal Rest* column, 18 August
All items to Val Ward by post or email