



## Fr Chris O'Brien, RIP

Fr Chris was ordained priest on 12th March 1960 having studied at Oscott College, Birmingham. He served as assistant priest in this parish from 1996 to July 2005, and on the evening of Friday 16th September 2005, the Parish gathered to give thanks for the 9 years that Father Chris had spent with us.

The message he left us with that evening, which was taken from the Gospel, was *"Love one another as I have loved you."* That certainly seems to sum up the way in which he engaged with everyone.

After leaving Tolworth, Fr. Chris took on pastoral responsibility for a Convent & Nursing Community in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, before eventually coming back to the parish in 2008 for several years, before moving up to Altrincham to be near his family.

We will all have our own fond memories of Fr Chris. For some it will be his kindness, warmth, love and sense of humour. For others, the way in which he celebrated the Church's liturgies with such reverence and care. Many would attend reconciliation in Tolworth because they knew he would be there with them. He was also a champion of immigrants and refugees and he did work with the Jesuit Refugee Centre in London.

The following is an extract from the introduction in the booklet created for his 50th Anniversary of ordination which seems to sum up the relationship Fr Chris had with this parish:

*"The whole purpose of this evening is to say thank you to you all, not only for putting up with me during those years, but, and this is serious, for the wonderful send off you gave me when I retired. When I came back a few weeks later for the farewell Mass, so beautifully planned and arranged by so many people, I was to use the phrase of C.S. Lewis "Surprised by Joy" and for me that was the happiest occasion of my life.*

*Tonight's Mass will be a simple one (I hope that by now the dentist will have provided me with a new denture!) and is my way of saying thank you for the 10 years I served here, and for all the kindness shown to me since moving into my flat in Ewell Road in October 2008: without your loving care, I simply would not have survived."*

Fr Chris sadly passed away on Saturday 21st August. Our prayers are with his family and friends, and indeed, all who knew him. May he rest in peace.

A Requiem Mass will be held in OLI on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm. The Diocese will announce the funeral arrangements in due course.