

A Message from Canon Priscoe

I had hoped to have taken a personal farewell of you all, but alas, that was not to be, and I am reduced to writing one instead. Perhaps it is just as well, and we are all spared a certain amount of emotionalism.

I think that in the life of every priest, there exists a certain undefinable relationship between himself and his people. I call it undefinable, because it really is so; respect yet affection not devoid of criticism - that we can all expect. At the same time a tremendous loyalty and an appreciation of the help spiritual and material that we give and which so often make us wonder what we have done to deserve it.

I said it was undefinable. Perhaps you have the answer: I don't know.

For fifty years, and in the varying parishes I have served - and indeed they were varied in every possible respect, except for the presence of this undefinable relationship, - I have spent a very happy life.

The last twenty-six have been with you, much has been achieved: debt paid off on St. Ambrose; a considerable share in the setting up of Bl. Thomas Holford; the building of our own school; the ~~starting of a new Parish, St. John the Baptist.~~ the starting and maintenance of St. Margaret Ward - this is so often overlooked - the buying of what now serves as our car park; the maintenance of Church, House and Hall. There are so many other things, I wouldn't know where to stop. All this is due to your loyal co-operation, service, patience and affection.

We have been fortunate in having a happy, working-together school teaching and ancillary staffs, some of whom alas, have come to the end of their teaching career.

And what about our innumerable voluntary workers, who year after year have never let us down. Church work of all kinds done with thoroughness and reliability.

Then there were the priests sent to assist - a happy and harmonious small community it is true, but well cared for and served.

I could have written a great deal more, but I find it more and more tiring.

Nonetheless, I could not close without some reference to Pope Paul. One can imagine him, last Sunday, the feast of the Transfiguration, when he met Our Lord, saying, as did his predecessor St. Peter, "It is good for us to be here," His troubles are now over. If I am worthy enough to be welcomed into Purgatory, may Paul's Illuminated Blessing in Church remind you to pray for me.

"May my plea pass not unheeded."