

# PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE – *'Sharing Wisdom for a Praying Parish'*

24 / 25 July 2010

Dear Friends

This weekend, we celebrate the Feast of our Patron St James. What better day to reflect on who we are as a 'Praying Parish'. Not only in our personal prayer life but also in our life as a Parish Community, our Prayer ... *Gathers, Opens, Transforms, Sends!* – particularly in our celebration of the Eucharist. Of course, last Sunday's gospel about Martha and Mary and today's gospel about how to pray form a good backdrop to this reflection.

The 'praying' Parish is the 'praying' Church, striving to be a dynamic living, breathing, growing reality, particularly at the local level. St Augustine can help us focus on **WHO** we are:

*You hear the words, 'The body of Christ,' and you answer, 'Amen.' Be therefore members of Christ, that your 'Amen' may be true ... When you receive communion, you receive the mystery of your own communion in love. Being many, you are one body. Many grapes hang on the vine, but the juice of the grapes is mingled into oneness ... Therefore, be what you see and receive what you are. (Sermon 272)*

*Who am I? What are you? You and I are nothing but the Church ... If God wills, we belong to his Church. But it is by love that we belong to the Church. And we must persevere to stay with the Church if we wish to show the love we have. (Sermon on 1 Jn 6)*

One of the reflections in which I took part at the recent Pray 2010 Conference was on 'The Prayer Life of the Parish'. A strong theme was the need for prayer to enhance the life of the Parish. And so, 'Do we need to pray more or pray better?' The answer is probably, 'Both!' Something I came to realize is the many ways we already pray in our parish. Think about the following times when our Parish prays:

- **At Eucharist, the 'summit and source' of our life;**
- **In the Sacraments when we are in need – at times of initiation (Baptism and Confirmation), when we need forgiveness (Reconciliation), when we commit ourselves in love (Marriage), when we are sick (Anointing), when we are chosen for leadership (Holy Orders);**
- **At special liturgies – Saints, Jubilees, Funerals and Grieving, Anointing and Healing, School Celebrations and many others;**
- **At Meetings – Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Committee, Parish Team, RCIA, Liturgy, Social Justice, School Board, Staff Meetings, SVDP, etc;**
- **Home and Hospital Visiting;**
- **Exposition, Prayer Groups and parishioners' personal prayer;**
- **Prayers for those in need – the troubled, sick or dying, victims of tragedy or violence, etc.**

Holiness is our call as Christians and clearly our prayer is the foundation of the quality of life in our Parish Community – how we see others, how we relate, how together we are the Body of Christ. Our ways of prayer are many and those mentioned here are a source of hope and joy, but they are also reminders of our

need to persevere in prayer and to support one another in this wonderful work.  
As today we give grateful thanks, let us pray for one another.

*Fr Dave*