

SEPTEMBER 2018

We enter into the final quarter of our Baptism Preparation project, and the hope and plan is to continue beyond the 'official' end date.

I am happy to report that the team at St Alphege's, Bath has another member, so a 5-strong team now (amazing!) and, to date, I have trained four teams in all our pilot parishes. Two teams are very active, and there are several parishes in our diocese who have been offering baptism preparation on a regular basis and hearing from them about their experience has been both uplifting and encouraging!

Our training in Calne started at 9.45am on Sunday 30th September at St Edmund's with four willing volunteers from the parish. Our further sessions will take place on Sunday 14th October, Sunday 18th November and Sunday 6th December. If you are reading this and are interested in joining us in Calne, or have an interest in being trained to deliver baptism preparation for parents, please get in touch with me via my email anitra.rawlins@cliftondiocese.com. I'm waiting on a date to start at St Teresa's, Filton and Fr Jeremy will be in touch on how we progress at St Mary's, Bath. We also have some nibblers which is encouraging!

My next opportunity to present the project to some more of our diocesan priests will be on Tuesday 9th October. Fr David Mills has invited me to the priests' deanery meeting at St Gregory's, Cheltenham. There is still an appetite to bring all the teams together so I need to give this further thought to a date and venue – watch this space!

Please note that this resource for baptism needs to be firstly understood as a process of adult catechesis which allows parents to reflect on their role as the first and best teachers of their child in the ways of faith. The focus of the resource is to help parents have a real encounter with Jesus Christ and deepen within them what it means to belong to the body of Christ, the Church. We believe it's through this encounter that parents will be more able to be the first and best teachers of their children in the ways of faith.

A Future Full of Hope, our Year of Mission will soon be our Year of Prayer. With this in mind, the baptism preparation formation will:

- **Equip those who are walking with the families, improving their confidence to share their faith and help develop prayer within the family**
- **Gently challenge parents, affirming their role and mission as a family - the 'little' or 'domestic churches'**
- **Equip and sensitise the parish family in its mission to be a welcoming and prayerful community**
- **Help to retain families, encouraging them to become part of the parish family.**

Don't forget – we have some beautiful baptism anniversary cards available to buy at just 5p each. If you would like some, just send me an email and I'll pop them in the post to you - anitra.rawlins@cliftondiocese.com – a great way to stay in touch with your families!

