

DECEMBER 2018

The fledgling team at St Edmund's, Calne had their final session of training on the ninth of this month - Session 4 'The Resources: making them happen'. The team of five – Anne, Gabrielle,



Christine, Jess and Tessa; all of them keen to share their faith and listen in conversation with parents asking for baptism for their children. They will be a great resource for St Edmund's, Calne and St Anthony's, Melksham. I also met Mary from St Anthony's who is already familiar with preparing parents for baptism and one of her families joined us at the 11am Mass at St Edmund's to be 'formally' welcomed by the parish family. It was a delightful time, as the family

came forward and were welcomed with a Rite of Welcome. We all made our baptismal promises and were blessed/sprinkled with holy water! The shape and structure of the training is designed to ground and gently form the 'formers' and I, as the trainer, also found it more rewarding as we took our time to meet once a month for an hour before Mass on Sunday morning.

If you are reading this and are interested in joining us, the next training session will be held at St Teresa's in Filton, Bristol. Or simply get in touch with me via my email anitra.rawlins@cliftondiocese.com or the office telephone 0117 902 5595.

On Wednesday, 6th December, I held some refresher training at St Bernadette's, Whitchurch with Linda, Caroline and Trish. The parish have also decided how they will take the preparation sessions forward, and the subsequent baptisms are to be held during Mass with the parish family.

Fr David from St Gregory's has confirmed that Cheltenham Deanery is hoping to begin training a team in the new year - looking for willing volunteers to come forward and then we can get started with this beautiful training. St Mary's, Bath are also waiting on a date to start.

Back in November, I attended the annual Marriage & Family Life Conference and the subject was Family Ministry and Catechesis as Accompaniment. What better place to start than at the beginning – it starts with Baptism! Other conversations across the diocese have included how to support parents when their children are being prepared for their First Confession and First Holy Communion. There are resources available to enable parishes to accompany parents in their own faith journey at this time too, so please get in touch if I can help.

In our diocesan vision *A Future Full of Hope* we are now in our Year of Prayer with St Luke. 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.