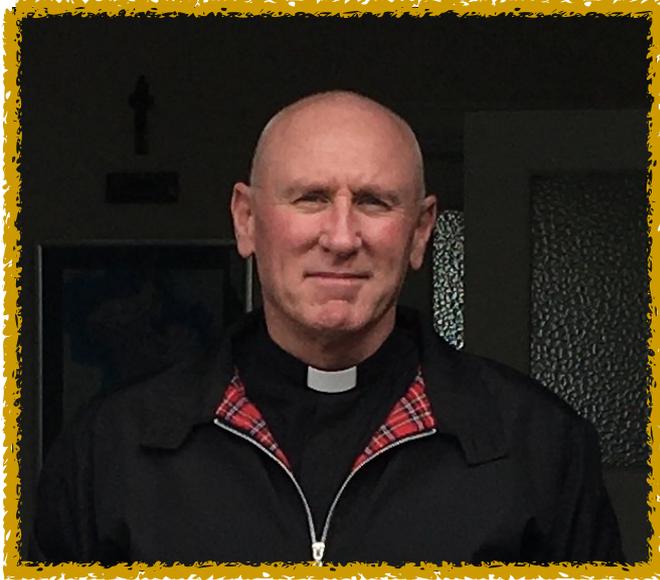


***A message from Fr Michael Thompson
Parish Priest at St Mary's, Castletown
& St Columba's, Port Erin
from 1st September 2020***



Dear All,

Just a short message to introduce myself to the Island.

Ordained a priest in 1990, I was seminary educated in Osterley, Valladolid, Spain and completed my formation for the priesthood with 12 months in Durham.

For the past thirty years I have ministered in parishes around the Archdiocese of Liverpool, mostly in the new towns built to

accommodate those who came from the Scotland Road area of Liverpool - as my own father and his family did.

For approximately eight years I served in four parishes as a curate mostly as a hospital chaplain with some high school work, too.

After completing some further studies, I was made parish priest in St Peter and Paul's, Tower Hill, Kirkby which lasted approximately eight years and then for the last fifteen years I've been parish priest at St Richard's in Skelmersdale.

I served as Dean of the Upholland Pastoral Area for twelve years, moving between 'Leaving Safe Harbours' under Archbishop Kelly and for a period attempting to implement 'Synod 2020' under Archbishop Malcolm.

Skelmersdale has always been an innovative parish and the idea of team ministry between priests and people in the Archdiocese really started there under the tutelage of some hard working and innovative clergy.

My duties also covered two other churches, five primary schools and a high school. I now leave St Richards in the very capable hands of Fr Kenny Hyde who is from the south end of Liverpool.

Furthermore, when the Ampleforth Benedictines gave up Our Lady and All Saints, Parbold, after approximately two hundred years, I ministered there, too, until the pandemic struck. Fr Leo Daly has now become their new parish administrator which I'm happy has happened so that a period of stability can now begin for the parish.

My Dad was from Liverpool and educated at Saint Francis Xavier's with the Jesuits, and after leaving school, served in the army as an MP in Germany. One of my Dad's sisters was a head teacher in Leeds and my Uncle Joey studied classics at Durham. His other three sisters continued to live in and around Liverpool, marrying and raising families - apart from my Aunty Frances.

My Mum's side of the family, especially my uncles, served in the Forces during the war: one in the Navy and another with Monty in the desert. My grandfather served in Gallipoli but his brother Peter was killed at what is known as 'the big push' at the Somme. My Aunty Eileen, my Mum's sister, never married, but was a great influence on the family. After leaving the army, my Dad moved to Warrington looking for work where he met my Mum at Mass in St Mary's, a town centre parish which at the time was served by the Benedictines.

Eventually they married and had six children and I am the eldest. Four boys and two girls - or should I say three girls too, but baby Catherine died at birth so in reality we were seven children, but six surviving.

My first parish priest was Dom Gabriel Gilbey who had a great influence on all who met him - especially his altar servers. I was eventually ordained in St Mary's by Archbishop Worlock who amongst many other things was well known for his ecumenical work with Bishop David Shepherd, his Anglican counterpart and a well-known cricketer.

I now look forward to working with Monsignor Devine and the other priests on the island, hoping to continue the same team ministry I'm accustomed to, between priests and people.

I look forward also to working ecumenically, carrying on the great work of Archbishop Worlock who with Bishop Shepherd coined the phrase 'better together'

Fr Mike

Parish Priest

Castletown and Port Erin