

# THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

## **How a about a Church?**

When I came to Wollaton three years ago, I left behind a parish that had just built a church. One of the things which has been in the air ever since is the possibility of building one here in Wollaton.

## **Could we?**

Melbourne and Castle Donington is a parish of about the same size as Wollaton. They already possessed a large church in Melbourne, which had been built by the Kerr family in 1908; but it was five miles away from three-fifths of the parishioners. So they decided to build a most hall-church, and did so. They were good fund-raisers: a group of about forty parishioners were raising £ 1,000 per month when I left, using very simple but regular means. Wollaton would be much better-placed, because there are not two centres to the parish, and we are not supporting two churches!

## **Should we?**

The perennial problem surrounding the building of churches is the question of resources. One hears quoted the famous story of the alabaster jar of ointment ("This could have been sold for much, and the money given to the poor!"); it is endlessly argued that these pious words were in fact spoken by Judas, and rebuked by Jesus: "The poor are with you always!" And it is certainly true that a flourishing church is a gift to the poor. Oxfam send most of their material to churches, and get most of their funding

from them. Some, however, believe that there are all too many churches already, and find the proposal to build another one most unattractive.

## **Various Needs**

One fact that I have discovered is this: some people *need* a church more than others. Some people are strongly spiritual in their outlook. They find it irrelevant whether they worship God in a Cathedral or a tin tab; they couldn't care less how it looks or even how it is kept. There is a successful evangelical church in Nottingham that meets in a rented school hall every Sunday (although I believe they are planning to build). Other people find the sacred space of a church vitally consoling and nutritive. They feel the need for a physical expression of the community and its roads to holiness; and they find this in the physical presence of the community's home. The Irish word for a church means, literally, "the Public House"!

## **How about you?**

*If we want a new church*, I'm quite certain we can have one. If we don't think it is a good idea, I think we should say so clearly, and put the idea out of our minds... and repair the Sacristy door and the broken windows. I feel that we need a meeting to ventilate these questions; in the meantime, please give it some thought and prayer.

*Fr Philip*