

A Week In The Life Of Fr Philip O'Dowd *Catholic Chaplain*

Monday – park on East drive by 7 30 (or die). Morning Prayer 8 30, coffee with students, Chaplains' meeting 10 30, Oxfam lunch (sore fingers slicing cheese); afternoon talking to students: one new father, Chilean PhD student, starry-eyed: one unhappy: one uncertain, choosing a future. Home for *The Simpsons*, rush dinner, Mass in Wollaton, biblical group in parishioner's home (members astounded by Transfiguration....could I astound three congregations next Sunday?)

Tuesday – day off. Mass in Wollaton. Find Mexican student, six months here, has seen Heathrow, Beeston and the Campus. We aggregate a Ghanaian, and my invaluable assistant, Honest Dave, and head for circular tour - Vale of Belvoir, Grantham, Lincoln. Magna Carta, Castle, Cathedral. Home via Waitrose, clutching Vignotte. Pleasant dinner, but no wine due to Lent. (*D'oh!*)

Wednesday – Morning Prayer, then tutorial for an aspiring (struggling) Deacon. Early lunch and discussion group on meaning of salvation. Cagey evangelical attends, leaving with borrowed books. Dave presents Sunday's Music Sheet for approval. It looks good. (But what shall I say about the Transfiguration?) Mass in the PB chapel, then home for Mass in Wollaton. Bizarre BBC journalist rings at 1 30 am to discuss dead Austrian bishop. Nightmare!

Thursday – morning Mass, Wollaton. Trying to park nearly impossible at 10 30. 20 minutes late, after long walk schlepping bag of books, compose the Back of the Bulletin (which Dave enwebs). Another PhD student arrives with baby and large Labrador: cheerful chaos ensues. Students discuss The War, and the impossibility of finding truth despite torrential information. Student offers a discarded computer for worthy cause. Contact Indian PG who snaps it up. Evening Ecumenical gathering for Wollaton Churches Together. We listen to Nigerian priest who studies media at the Trent, and discuss portraits of Christ, some of them very challenging.

Friday – Students propose workmanlike Scripture group for next year. They're sick of unassailed ignorance in themselves, and want to eliminate fundamentalism, superstition and bigotry. Very cheering - I feel as if Spring has sprung. Afternoon Mass in QMC. Alumnus rings from Hong Kong to warn me not to let HK students into my office – lest the SARS bug double me up. The weekly *Tablet* arrives, and a discussion ensues about anti-war Europeans. Will monetary might, as usual, salve all consciences in the end? Home for Stations of the Cross and Mass.

Saturday – Morning mass. Clean the house and do the washing. A parishioner comes for advice in great difficulty. In the afternoon, engaged alumni visit from Wirral to discuss their wedding in September. Evening Mass with folk-group. Forest wins away – servers delirious. Transfiguration homily gets first outing.

Sunday – 8 45 Parish Mass: *a capella*, as organist still away at University. Transfiguration gets modification: too early for ecstasy? Parishioner having chemotherapy looks poorly. But two others recovering impressively. Three babies appear to be joining in singing (and preaching): all in fine voice. 10 30, University Mass in Great Hall: the last termtime liturgy. Transfiguration, mk. 3. The Music Group impressive, and students eager to see each other before term ends. Sacrament of Reconciliation in the crush porch – any port in a storm. Monday's new dad and his wife attend, bursting with joy as crowds worship Pedro, six days old. Baptism

arranged for June. An hour visiting poorly Wollatonians, and Sunday becomes a day of rest!