

## Weekly Message from Fr William for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2023

On Wednesday we hosted the Annual General Meeting of CTiK (Christians Together in Knaresborough) in St Mary's parish hall. We ministers of the different denominations in town meet four times each year to pray together, discuss together, and look for opportunities to work together. The AGM opens this up to a wider participation and gives all Christians in Knaresborough the opportunity to be part of this communal prayer, and part of this collaboration. A review of CTiK activities during 2022 listed 15 joint activities including the production of and distribution of CTiK 'welcome to knaresborough' booklets to the new housing developments. The AGM concluded with two presentations – one about Knaresborough Foodbank, and one about Resurrected Bites – by representatives of these two important volunteer services. There was a good St Mary's presence at the AGM.

On Thursday we celebrated the Confirmation of nine young members of our parish. The Sacrament of Confirmation was conferred by Bishop Marcus and took place in St Robert's in Harrogate, along with many other young candidates from across the Harrogate Deanery. Bishop Marcus spoke about the importance of this moment in their young lives, and contrasted the simplicity of the liturgical action with the magnitude of the statement they make by being confirmed. They may not feel any different, a 'What was all that about?' moment, as Bishop Marcus put it. But the statement they make by being confirmed has great implications for the way they will now go on to live their lives as Christians.

One CTiK initiative we took part in was the Warm Welcome initiative, offering a warm welcoming place to come in our parish hall on Tuesday mornings. However, it became clear that there is currently no significant need for this in Knaresborough, which is good news, and so we're not continuing with this one, and I think other churches and Christian communities in town have come to a similar conclusion. Thank you to our volunteers who took part in this. Thanks for your time and generosity.

Overshadowing everything else at this time is the earthquake disaster in Turkey and Syria. The suffering and loss of life is unimaginable. Each loss of life and each individual suffering is a tragedy. Many of you will be donating to the relief efforts. Many of you will be praying for everybody involved – those caught up in the disaster, those working on the rescue effort, and those bringing humanitarian assistance. There will be an opportunity at Mass this Sunday to pray. And there will be an opportunity to donate to the Disaster Emergency Committee. The DEC brings together 15 leading aid charities to raise funds quickly and efficiently at times of crisis overseas and are pivotal in co-ordinating the UK public's response to overseas disasters. I'll try to provide you with an opportunity to donate to the DEC specifically for the Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal, and also for two other crises the DEC are still responding to and can easily be eclipsed and forgotten about – the Pakistan Floods Appeal, and the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. You're welcome, if you want to, to donate to one or more of these DEC responses.



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023