

Report in respect of Grant FSJ19-4

The Trustees of the *Fellowship of St John (UK) Trust Association* kindly agreed to the repurposing (in March 2019) of the second instalment of an earlier grant made to St George, Bickley to support ministry among children and families, the first instalment having assisted in the employment of a Families Missioner, whose two-year appointment ended in Spring 2019.

I am very pleased to report to the Trustees that both the *standard* of our children's ministry and the *reach* of the same has been maintained, in large part due to your generous support: the number of children at Mass on a "usual Sunday" in 2019 was 17 (2018 : 19 | 2020 *(to date)* : 18), rising significantly on greater festivals, e.g. 43 children present at Mass on Easter Day. Our Christmas Eve Crib Services were attended by combined congregations of 373 people.

The leadership team overseeing our ministry to children and families has grown to include three adults, who are now able to provide tailored Sunday Mass resources appropriate to both younger and older children. Sessions of *Messy Church* were organised on five occasions during 2019 (including once at our parish primary school), involving on average 42 people, of whom on average 20 were children. Our *Messy Church* team attended the regional "Messy Fiesta", and have also been involved in the introduction of the format to HMP Rochester.

Our efforts to dovetail the Sunday morning experience of our Children's Church with the wider congregation have included the purchase of children's Missals, and awards to those whose example of attentiveness in and engagement with worship has been an inspiration to the wider group. Five young people were prepared and presented for Confirmation.

We continue to contribute regularly to Collective Worship in our parish primary school, and were pleased to welcome (for the first time together) both our local Scout Group and Air Cadet Squadron on Remembrance Sunday, and to present an anthology of poems and prayers to the many young people present. St George's hosted a service for children in Year 3 from *eight* primary academies of the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust, and a group of Year 5 students from our own parish primary school travelled with me on pilgrimage to Walsingham overnight.

The confidence shown in us by the Trustees of FSJ has motivated the PCC to continue to invest its own resources in our ministry to children and families - and to seek additional external support: we will, for example, be piloting a lifestyle coaching programme for young people (in our school and congregation) later this year, having identified emotional literacy provision for young people across the institutions of our parish as a key social concern for our social outreach.

We were delighted to welcome most of those baptised during the preceding twelve months, and their families, to a celebration of baptism during one Sunday Mass (*photograph attached*).

Fr Richard Norman SSC