

Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit and the English Martyrs

Great Bardfield and Thaxted Parishes

Annual Report for the Year of 2024

We are thankful to the members of our parish and the greater community for the renewed enthusiasm we are enjoying following the difficult times of the global pandemic. Through your efforts and support we have a welcoming environment for those who want to know Christ Jesus more personally through the Catholic faith.

Our little parish continues to grow. Just before the year began, we welcomed five young people to the faith through the Sacrament of Confirmation and two children received the Sacrament of Baptism. On a parish open day Father Celestine welcomed 4 new/returning members to our parish.

In many ways, this year was the start of a modest, but exciting, revitalisation. Parishioners raised funds to send three of our young men to the blessed shrine of Our Lady in Lourdes, France. These young men came back to us with an inspiring, renewed, commitment. We also enjoyed a visit from a newly ordained priest, Father Bede; on his way to his first posting in Jamaica. Also known as Daniel Mullins, this priest's burgeoning faith was kindled during his early years in our parish, when he served on the altar.

We also began a long-term rejuvenation project for the Great Bardfield church building thanks to the help of our congregation. One important focus thus far, has been a renewal of the front garden with new flowers, hedge trimming and a deep cleaning of the surrounding stonework. Upon cleaning the stones, we were greeted with a wonderful surprise. A beautiful cross, comprised of pink stones, lovingly laid many years ago, reappeared thanks to the pressure washing. Most of us had no idea the cross was there.

Our church was pleased to participate in the World Day of Prayer and the Remembrance Day services held in Great Bardfield. It was also our privilege to host the Ecumenical Christmas Carol Service along with other local denominations and the Bardfield Community Choir.

We wish to remind everyone of our monthly social charity event after Mass (circa 10:30) on the first Sunday of each month. Our talented parishioner/chefs provide cookies, pastries and cakes for all to enjoy with donations going to needy charities. All are welcome to our weekly Masses at 5pm in Thaxted and 9:30am each Sunday in Great Bardfield. Fr. Celestine also offers Mass at 09:30 on most Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament following 9:30 Mass on Friday. Our new parish sign, posted along the front pavement, provides contact details for those who are interested.

Reverend Father Celestine Onwuekwe