

Farewell Dinner for a “People’s Priest”

As printed in “The Universe”

Rossendale, Lancashire: A dinner was held on Wednesday 7th February to say farewell to Canon David Lupton and his sister, Barbara, and to thank Canon Lupton for thirty-three years service at the church of St James the Less in Rawtenstall.

After fifty-one years as a priest Fr David, as he prefers to be known, announced his intention to retire as parish priest. Popular with all ages and, with a special affinity for the sick and elderly, Fr David has also had a talent for encouraging the children of the parish to take an active part in church activities both spiritual and social.

He was ordained in 1967 and, after serving as curate at St Robert’s Longsight, spent eight years at St James the Less then became parish priest at St Joseph’s Accrington for a time before returning to St James the Less in 1993. The parish was fortunate that his family joined in assisting him in his work and, during his second assignment at the church his sister, Barbara, lived with him in the presbytery giving him much appreciated help and support.

So it was that when their departure was announced two parishioners, Phil Barnes and Gerard Cahill, got together to organise a farewell dinner to enable the parishioners to show their appreciation for the many kindnesses Fr David and Barbara have shown over the years.

Fr David is a keen football fan and a supporter of Burnley FC and Manchester City so it seemed fitting that the dinner was held in the Hargreaves suite above one of the stands at Turf Moor, Burnley FC’s ground.

There were 430 parishioners and friends of the parish at the occasion. The Bishop of Salford, Bishop John Arnold, attended as did Fr David’s family. Georgie O’Callahan, with whose youth football team in Castleisland, Co. Kerry

Fr David had organised a youth team footballing exchange over a period of forty years, travelled over from Ireland. It was an occasion for remaking old friendships.

Bishop John said the Grace then, after a fine three course meal, there followed short speeches: Phil Barnes as principal organiser and MC spoke first followed by his co-organiser Gerard Cahill and by parishioner Bill Wilkinson. Fr David responded then Bishop John gave a few words during which he told us that Fr David’s replacement as parish priest of St James the Less was to be Canon Tony McBride.

Altar servers presented Barbara with a splendid bouquet of flowers on behalf of the parish. Then followed a program of entertainment:

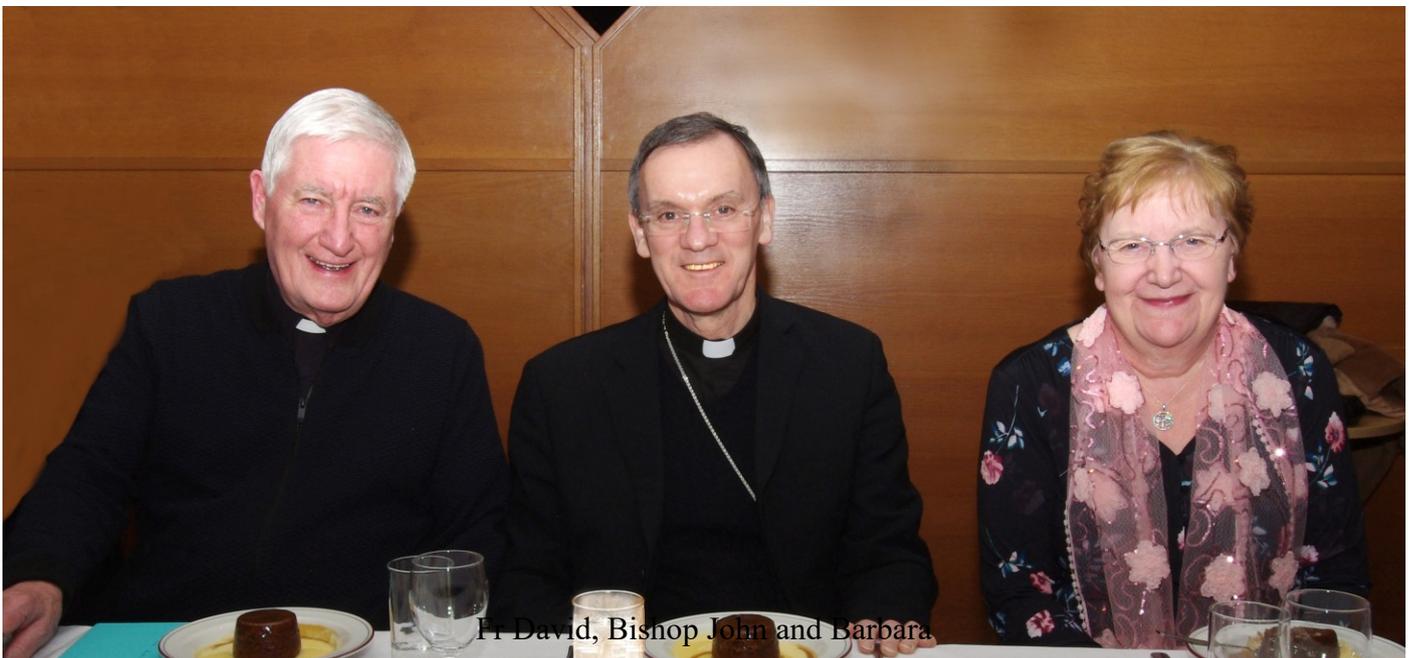
Grace O’Malley, a parishioner and an exceptionally talented singer who studied at Chetham’s School of Music and who is now undergoing training as an opera singer performed a medley of songs which held everyone spellbound.

St James the Less Irish Dancers schooled by Fiona Shell put on a truly spectacular display of footwork and athleticism.

Operatic Tenor Sean Ruane, a favourite at St James the Less wound up the evening with some old favourites and a singalong.

Everyone left happy and uplifted.

Fr David is to leave St James the Less on the 26th February. As announced by Bishop John, from that date we will be welcoming Canon Tony McBride to the parish.



Fr David, Bishop John and Barbara