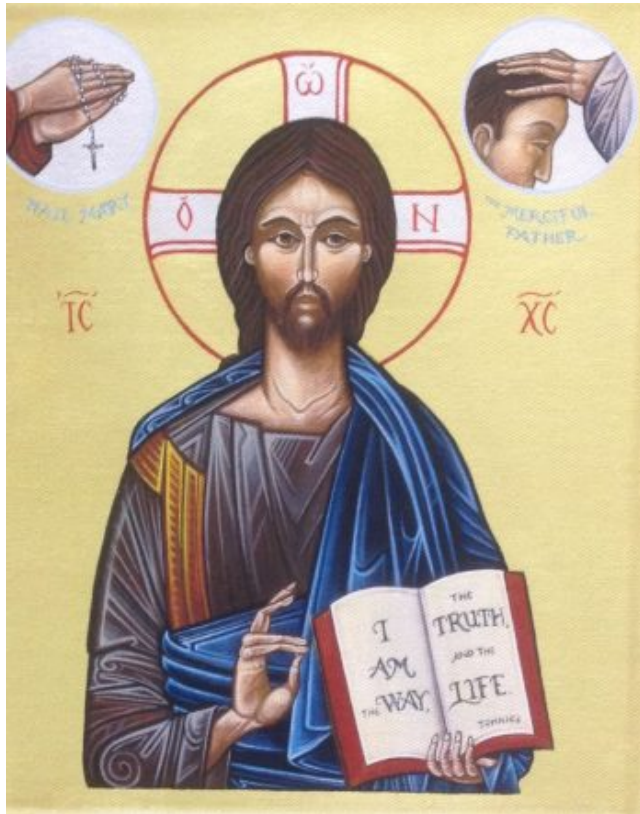


Jubilee for Prisoners
November 15, 2016



By, Fr David Mellor, Archbishop's representative for Prison Chaplaincy

On Sunday 6th November Bishop Kenney spoke in St Chad's Cathedral about his recent meeting with Pope Francis in Lund, Sweden. That occasion was during the visit of the Holy Father to Sweden to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and Bishop Kenney was present as Co-chair of the International Conversations between the Lutheran and Catholic Churches.

The occasion in Birmingham was the Mass for the Jubilee for Prisoners which was attended by chaplains, volunteer visitors and many others who support the ministry in the prisons in the Archdiocese. Bishop Kenney had been able to tell the Holy Father of the Mass and what was planned. At the Mass most of the 14 prisons in Birmingham Archdiocese were represented. At the end each prison received a copy of an icon painted by Rev Regan O'Callaghan depicting Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, as well as small images of a hand in blessing 'The Merciful Father' and a hand in prayer with the rosary and 'Hail Mary'. The icons are

the gift of the Bishops of England and Wales. They were blessed by Bishop Kenney to be taken back to the prison chapels.

In his homily the Bishop spoke of finding the Divine in all people regardless of their status. He related a story of a member of the Royal Family, who on receiving an award for 25 years of driving without an offence, responded that it was rather an award for 25 years of 'undetected crime'. Apart from causing mirth, the story enabled those present to see crime and sin in context.

Pope Francis had been happy to relate to Bishop Kenney that he would be receiving prisoners and their families in St Peter's Square on 6th November. Our Bishop had to respond that this would not be possible in St Chad's Cathedral, but that they would be remembered in prayer.

Music at the Mass was very well provided by the Diocesan Singers (The late Canon Peter Jones' group) and pupils of the Holy Redeemer Catholic Primary School, Pershore, directed by Alan Smith and Anne Tibke.

Please remember all those in the prisons of the Archdiocese regularly in your prayers, as well as their families and loved ones. Thank you to all who work in the prison chaplaincies of the Archdiocese. The prisoners are all so much in need of us and value the support which we give them.

