

A letter from Fr John,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I feel very privileged to have been called to serve as your new Priest and Ministry Area Leader in the parishes of Abergavenny and Govilon and I am greatly looking forward to moving to Abergavenny and working with you in a partnership of priest and people sharing in God's mission and sharing God's love with our churches and communities.

This very much feels like 'coming home' - as many of you know I was Vicar of LLantilio Pertholey with Bettws Chapel and Llanddewi Skirrid from 2000-2005 and my children attended both Llantilio Pertholey Church in Wales Primary School and King Henry VIII Secondary School. My parishioners in Wokingham used to pull me up on the fact that I always talked about 'going home to Wales' rather than referring to my native Yorkshire!

I have a great love for our town, it's history, culture and people and I am excited and energized by the prospect of working with you. I know how much the current pandemic has affected our ability to enjoy worship, fellowship and friendships in person but I am grateful to all who have worked so hard in the parishes during this time to keep in touch, to care for those in need and to nurture and nourish our spirits through online worship.

Lent may seem like an odd time to announce a new beginning for your parishes but the message of Lent is a message of love - a love that triumphs in and through those times of wilderness, sorrow, grief and pain, not by taking these things away from us, but by loving us through them. A love that knows no limits, a love that leads us to the cross to see arms outstretched in love for each and everyone of us. A love that triumphs over death and brings new life and hope on Easter Day.

You are very much in my prayers, and I hope that you will be praying for me and Claudio and for the people of St Augustine's Rumney as we prepare to leave our home here and join you.

May the love of Jesus be your close companion this Lent, I look forward to joining you in the joyful season of Eastertide.

Yours in Christ

Fr John