

A message from Fr Tom: It is a great joy to have been appointed to the Parish of Holy Angels. I'm grateful to Fr Martin for inviting me to write this short message, and for his kindness and warmth in welcoming my appointment to the Parish.

I very much look forward to meeting and getting to know you and your families over the coming months, and to celebrating together the gift God has given us in Jesus. These are strange times for us all, and I know how concerned Bishop Mark is for the people of Trafford, particularly with the recent and sudden local tightening of the Government's guidance for the pandemic.

As a Priest, you go where you are sent, and I know well that it takes time and patience for a Parish when they receive a new Parish Priest - it's also true for the Priest himself - but I am very glad to have received this appointment to Hale Barns. Alongside this, I will continue to have two Diocesan responsibilities as Judicial Vicar and Diocesan Chancellor. Both demand a fair amount of work each week, but I know that this Parish has plenty of experience of Priests who have additional responsibilities beyond the Parish, and I am sure we will make it work.

I am fortunate to have seen quite a lot of our Diocese over my past three pastoral appointments on the Wirral, at the Cathedral and in rural Shropshire. I already know the South Manchester area quite well having spent some years in Sale before Bishop Brian, of happy memory, accepted me for training as a Priest and sent me to seminary. Those were rich and blessed years for me and I am fortunate still to have many good friends in the South Manchester area. I will be thrilled, then, to be returning to the area as Parish Priest of what I know is a vibrant, devoted Parish.

I hope we will pray for one another over these coming weeks, particularly, if you have a moment, on Thursday 3rd September which will be the anniversary of my Priestly Ordination. Fr Martin tells me that there were Holy Angels parishioners there at St Joseph's on the day, which is a lovely thing to know. Though I will not, by that point, have yet been able to take up the new appointment, and will still be here in Shropshire, I will offer Mass for the people of Holy Angels that day.

May God continue to bless you all over the coming weeks; may His Holy Angels protect us; and let us pray for one another.

With all good wishes,

Fr Tom