Congratulations to Father Victor
25th Anniversary of Ordination 28th June 2011 & 50th Birthday on 8th September 2011

Father Victor celebrated his 25th Anniversary of Ordination on 28th June with his family in Malta.

The parish wished to celebrate it with him so chose Father’s 50th birthday on 8th September. This was the Feast Day of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mass took place at 8pm at Holy Innocents’ and many parishioners attended. In his homily Father referred to his faith being nurtured by his parents and family. He referred to all the parishes in which he had spent his ministry and parishioners he had met, all of whom contributed to his service of the Lord. Some were present this evening. Father encouraged everyone to seek out their own vocation whatever it may be. The Liturgy and music chosen ensured a most uplifting joyous celebration of Mass. The school choir sang most beautifully.

Presentation of Symbols during the Thanksgiving Mass with an explanation written by Sarah May.
"As we are gathered here in celebration of Father Victor’s 25 years in the Priesthood we bring forward symbols that represent his love and dedication to his Ministry and his service to God."

The Maltese Cross and photos of Gozo Cathedral.
Father Victor comes from a strong Catholic family in the strong Catholic culture of the Maltese islands. The four arms of the cross each have two points and the eight points therefore have been seen to represent the eight Beatitudes as recorded in Matthew’s Gospel. Father Victor’s family home is situated almost within the shadow of Gozo Cathedral. Home and family life provided the setting for his response to the priestly vocation. This response was subsequently seen when Father Victor was ordained in the Cathedral on the 28th June 1986. The photographs show both the interior and exterior of the Cathedral together with his celebratory Mass there earlier this summer.

The Oils.
The Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens and the Holy Chrism are used by the priest in administering the Sacraments. When a priest is ordained he is anointed with the Holy Chrism, a sign of the special anointing of the Holy Spirit who makes his ministry fruitful. The priestly ministry is one of service. Father Victor expresses this service not simply through personal pastoral care but also by his drive and enthusiasm.

The Bible
This reminds us of Father Victor’s love of the word of God and of his constant striving to deepen his knowledge and understanding of sacred scripture, in part through his pursuit of the study of Hebrew. This hunger to learn has the effect in its turn of feeding and nourishing us.

Rosary.
We’re often reminded by Father Victor that our lives as followers of Christ must be steeped and rooted in prayer. One aspect of Father Victor’s prayer life is his love of the Rosary and he attributes many answers to prayer from the practice of this devotion.
Stole.
The stole is the vestment symbolic of the priestly office. It can be seen to represent the yoke of the Lord referred to by Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel, “Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light”.

The Bread and Wine as representative of the Eucharist.
It is in the Eucharist that the priest exercises in a supreme degree his sacred office. There, acting in the person of Christ he unites the offerings of the faithful to the sacrifice of Christ. In the Mass the Priest makes present again and applies the unique sacrifice of Christ offering himself once and for all a spotless victim to the Father. It is from this unique sacrifice that the whole priestly ministry draws its strength.”

…..Sarah May

Reception in the School Hall
After Mass all withdrew to the school hall where a delicious array of cuisine prepared by parishioners awaited. Father had expressed a wish that the celebration be low key, however parishioners had other ideas! His having been absent from the parish for 7 weeks over the summer meant there was the opportunity to prepare without him being aware of it. Important references to the occasion were even kept off the website to keep Father unaware of plans!

Father Victor became speechless with amazement when he realised the extent of the celebrations!
(This delighted those present for this was rare indeed!!)

Wayne Du Preez addressed the parishioners and then Headmaster Ryan Langford presented the gifts that the Holy Innocents’ schoolchildren had prepared. A sheaf of papers containing prayers each individually written by the children was among the gifts.

Wayne gave further gifts from parishioners which were:-

A framed Papal Blessing,
A bound book with Parishioners’ comments and good wishes
& proceeds of a collection from Parishioners amounting to £1317.24p.
Father thanks all for his gifts. He says he tries to give 100% to his work, which was his blessing and his failure, as sometimes this was not always possible.

Father could scarcely believe that the parishioners were so appreciative of him.

Father has a great sense of humour, yet his deep spirituality inspires and encourages all of us in our journey of faith.

!!A beautiful cake for an anniversary!!

Father asked how far to insert the knife?

Answer:....

...Why...100% of course!!

Thoughtful little lady >>>>>>>>>>
The youngest one here!
It’s been a long day!

The hall was packed with parishioners eager to show their appreciation
Parishioners and others honour Father Victor’s Celebrations.

<<<Bethan who has recently returned from World Youth day in Madrid. A member of the music group, Bethan inspires us with her melodious singing.

Helen, Hilary & friend

<<<Everyone shows a smile for Father Victor on this special night.

Kath and son Steven

<<<<<< Father enjoys a drink and chats to Ken & Berenice

Liz sharing a joke
Mayoma also sings beautifully in the choir.

All sections of the community coming together to celebrate Father’s long ministry.

Though only at Holy Innocents’ for three years, Father has touched many hearts and we sincerely hope he will be our Parish Priest for many years to come.

Ann, a member of the music group, with Nina. Our music group enhances the celebration of Mass and services and adds so much to our worship.

The food was delicious as parishioners had put extra care in its preparation thus adding to the specialness of the occasion. There are some great cooks amongst the nuns and parishioners!

The flower arrangements, both in the Church and on the tables were beautiful.

Sister Esther had been feverishly working to co-ordinate the food supplies.

So many people worked so hard to make the evening special and thanks to all, your dedication is very much appreciated. 

Wayne & Linda and daughter.
Many people came to show Father Victor just how much he was respected, appreciated and held in affection by his parishioners. We thank the good Lord for Father’s long Ministry and the blessings received by so many through his diligent service wherever he was sent.

Jesus called and Father Victor accepted his vocation.  
Thank you Father Victor for all you have done for all those you helped on their journey of faith  
May God bless and be with your spirit always.

Father Victor’s Thank you

Fr. Victor would like to express his heartfelt thanks for the celebration on Thursday evening; he found the whole celebration awe-inspiring; he received an overwhelming number of good wishes, cards and gifts as well as the cheque for £1317.24 that was presented to him from the parishioners of Holy Innocents. To those who organised the evening, you know who you are, a massive thank you.

Father Victor’s family sent an email

Congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood

It was a matter of great joy for our family when our brother Victor was ordained a priest 25 years ago. In our family, the priesthood was regarded with the greatest respect, not just because we knew good priests and were served by good priests, for even then we knew that priests differed and differed greatly, but because the priesthood was rightly looked upon as a sacred consecration to God and to his Church.

And so our family welcomed Victor’s ordination twenty five years ago with the greatest joy. We were full of that profound spiritual joy on account of the Lord’s gifts being poured out upon Victor. And 25 years on, we continue to rejoice with Victor at the Silver Jubilee of his priesthood, still full of joy for that “sacred otherness” which has been bestowed on our son/brother, whereby he continues to live his consecration to God and to his holy Church as a priest.

And so with that deep joy which comes from the Lord, we give thanks to God for Victor’s 25 years of priesthood and priestly service. He celebrates his Silver Jubilee as the happy and proud parish priest of Holy Innocents Catholic Church, Orpington. We know that Victor has very happy memories of other parishes, including the St Mary’s Cathedral Parish Church, Gozo, and Our Lady of the Assumption, Northfleet. We know that his priest-colleagues in these places appreciated him and enjoyed his company. We have met enough people over the years from these communities to come to the conclusion that Victor had won the respect, affection and love of parishioners who regarded him as an effective and good priest. These parishes have all contributed to making Victor the priest he is today and to strengthening his vocation as a priest who is consecrated to God and to his Church.

So our heartfelt congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of your Ordination to the Priesthood. Victor, your family loves you; your friends rejoice with you; your people gather round you with affection; and the whole Church and the communion of saints in heaven gives thanks with you and for you. May God bless you now and in the future.

Signed: Dad, Mum, your sister: Antoinette, Maria, Louise and your brother Joe.
“Come and serve your Lord, do please heed My call.
As shepherd of My children, love and care for all.
Teach them of My scriptures, explain to them My Word.
Guide them in their worship,”…Victor listened and he heard.
Forsaking other choices, he accepted his vocation,
and went where he was bid, and served with dedication.
To Orpington he came, in the year two thousand and eight,
Holy Innocents’ the parish, where the people did await.
Without Parish Priest to guide them, many felt insecure
as if wandering in a circle, of direction so unsure.
Father Victor took the helm, parishioners’ confidence grew,
encouraged by his support, many their faith he’d renew.
A Biblical Hebrew scholar, Old Testament explained,
making homilies so inspiring, much insight all then gained.
We learned how Jesus lived, when in Israel He trod,
and the customs of the day, for He the Son of God.
To follow in His footsteps, Father Victor has long planned.
Metaphorically this he’s doing, but now in the Holy Land.
Furthering his Hebrew studies, getting closer to our Lord,
absent from our presence, but returning…..we’re assured.
This man of great compassion, sincerity and prayer,
portrays a sense of humour, so in merriment he’ll share.
So thank you for your Ministry, in caring for our souls.
Since Jesus made you fisherman, your catch it must be shoals!
Celebrate in homeland Malta, in your studies please do well,
and bring us back more insights, from ‘Eretz Yisrael.’ Cjs.
A Tribute from Bob and Cecilia Skudder (Cjs)