

The Opening of the New Centre, Cardiff



A Catholic Deaf Service has been in operation in South East Wales under various titles since the late seventies. Canon Hollywood, a priest of the Salford Diocese, with the help of Sr. Anthony D.C. (Daughter of Charity), was the first to establish a Service in Cardiff. This became a part of the CDA (Catholic Deaf Association) from which it received support and fellowship. A number of Diocesan priests celebrated the Mass on a regular basis, which was interpreted. There was no fixed venue at this time.

In the early eighties Sr. Denise Gardiner D.C. and Sr. Kathleen Fothergill D.C. were appointed to work full time. This was built up and expanded to include the rest of Wales, the South West of England and Cornwall. A regular Mass was celebrated. After having offices in several locations, the sisters moved to Talbot Street and rented a house (Marian House) belonging to the Benedictines of St Mary's, Canton. During this time the charity 'Catholic Care of the Deaf' was set up in 1991 to manage the growing Service. This was a separate charity to the Archdiocese.

A separate service for the dioceses of S.W. England and Cornwall was set up, which enabled Srs. Denise and Kathleen to focus their mission in Wales. Fr. Anthony Hodges became involved in the Service during his seminary training and was appointed as chaplain after ordination in 1991.

In 1996 Sr. Mary Chisholm D.C. and Sr. Maria Lanigan D.C. took over the running of the Service. Fr. Kevin Paine worked with the Service while at seminary and after ordination became part of the team as an additional chaplain.

A Mission Statement was developed, enabling Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Deafened people to fulfil their role as laity in the Church through pastoral and spiritual support and training in all ministries. This development led to the decision to establish the Service under the Archdiocesan structure. As well as the Catholic Deaf Service coming under the Archdiocese, it was also felt that Deaf people themselves would benefit more by integrating into the parish structure. This would give them the same access to the sacramental and pastoral life of the Church and enable them to more easily contribute to Catholic life in the Archdiocese.



St Philip Evans was chosen as the most suitable venue because of its circular shape which offers an environment conducive to Deaf worship. It is easily accessed with good parking facilities. It was decided to sell the Catholic Care of the Deaf offices (Marian House) and monies from the sale used to build premises to provide an office and meeting room within the church grounds. The sale took place in August 2004 and the charity took up temporary residence in St Philip Evans Church Hall. The Deaf Community who used Marian House became parishioners of St Philip Evans.

The move from Talbot St. was an emotional as well as a physical one, as many of us have fond memories of our time spent in there. Marian House had served us well but our premises were unsuitable for disabled access and our chapel became too small for the number of worshippers attending. As the service grew we became more aware of the need to access the physical and spiritual resources provided by the Archdiocese.



The Deaf Community has now been integrated into the Archdiocesan structure and is fully involved in parish life. The work of the charity 'Catholic Care of the Deaf' has now become part of the Archdiocese of Cardiff Pastoral Service. Under the umbrella of the Archdiocese we will continue to provide for the Spiritual and Pastoral needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Deafened people throughout Wales.



The new Centre was officially opened by Archbishop Smith on Thursday 27 September 2007. The new facilities provide the Service with an office, counselling area, storage cupboards toilets and a large meeting room with tea bar. As it was a completely New Build we have been able to install equipment to enable Deaf people to manage the Service.

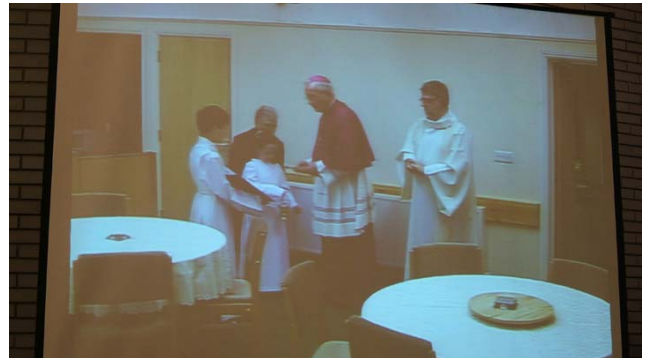
As you can imagine equipping the Centre has not been cheap. Anything useful from Marian House has been brought to the new building but we still needed to fund equipment such as a computer for

the office, fridge for the tea bar and tables for the meeting room.

In light of this we were absolutely delighted to receive a cheque for £3000.00 from the Bishop's Conference of Wales and England to help us in our work. We must acknowledge the role that Archbishop Peter Smith has played in enabling us to continue this valuable work both in Cardiff and the rest of Wales. We would like to thank him for his nomination which led to our receiving this sum of money. We were one of the groups that benefited from the special collection for 'The Day for Life' to which the Parishes in Wales and England contributed to recently.



With our new Centre, we look forward to serving the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafened people in Wales for many years to come.



During the service in Church, Archbishop Smith, with Fr Tony Hodges and Sr Mary went into the Centre. Archbishop Smith said a special prayer and blessed the new Centre. Everything was filmed live, it was relayed and projected onto a huge screen in Church so that everybody was able to follow what was happening.