

'repeat visitor' more, including increased follow-up visiting. Our Welcome Leaflet includes a 'Contact Card', but these are not always completed or followed up.

Although we have our own Service Books, our newcomers and visitors would be helped if we had a 'Guide to What we do in Church and Why'

Newcomers can be discouraged from attending social events which are also run as money-raisers. We need to find ways round this.

8. Becoming child-friendly

Strengths – There is a small but active Sunday School and it is always a delight to see our children participating in such things as lighting the Advent Candle and bringing harvest gifts. There are special children's events during the Early Music Festival, and a pioneering 'Children's Fringe' as part of the Castle Park Festival, attracting large numbers. Our children visit Trinity Hospital at Harvest and other times. We welcome various School Visits. There is a 'Young Person's Guide' to the church.

Needs – Not unusually, we experience loss of interest in church during teenage years. We already try to encourage active roles for teenagers, including servers, choir, bell ringing, but can perhaps do more.

9. Celebration of people and places

Strengths - St Mary's hosts many and varied celebration and other services for the City and County, including a number of 'high profile' services - Civic Service, County Service, Crown Court Services, Legal Services, Armed Forces Service, Services for DeMontfort University, (eg on 21st July 2006 the Church hosted the installation of the new Chancellor), St George's Day Service, Church Lads and Girls Brigade, Gateway College, Freemasons, Lord Mayor's Luminaria. In 2007 we celebrated our 900th anniversary, with two major services drawing congregations from far and wide, together with a Flower Festival, special peal of bells, Son et Lumiere and a parish social gathering.

Needs - Some of the services could perhaps be publicised more. We do not seek to 'poach' but do feel that St Mary de Castro has a distinct and perhaps unique role, not least because of our tradition and adaptability.

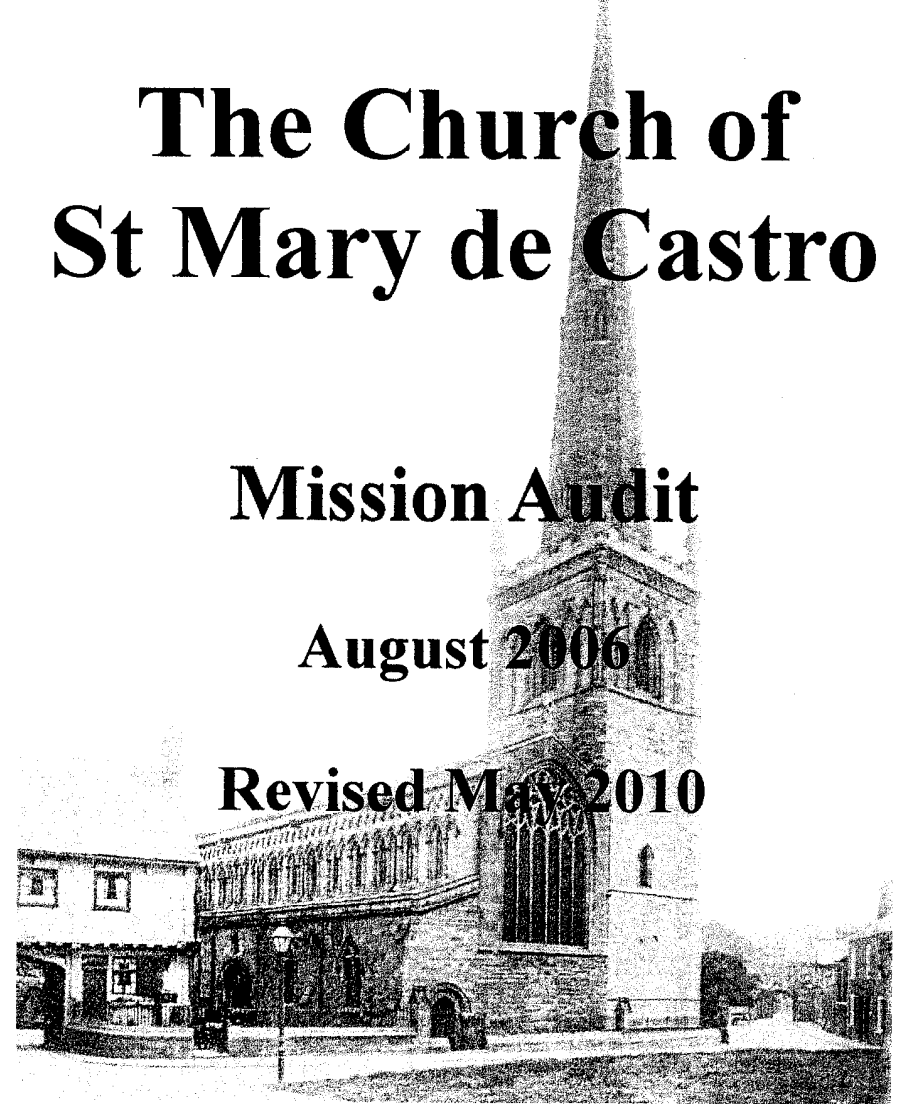
PARISH OF ST MARY, LEICESTER

The Church of St Mary de Castro

Mission Audit

August 2006

Revised May 2010



Trinity Hospital – The Vicar of St Mary de Castro has been the Chaplain, with ministry to the residents by the Clergy and one or two lay people from St Mary's.

City Centre Community – The Vicar was the only C of E priest resident in the City Centre, and therefore ministering to door-step callers seeking the help of a priest.

Other Communities which call on our services – see 9. This also includes the community at St Andrews, where St Mary's Clergy have given considerable support – an existing '*Mission Partnership*'.

Needs – We recognise that there is a need for increased pastoral visiting, including the sick, the elderly, those recently baptised, confirmed, married, or bereaved, and newcomers – see (7).

4. Being rooted in prayer

Strengths - The church has been prayed in for nearly nine centuries. We endeavour to continue this unbroken tradition no less in the present day – see (2). Visitors sense that it is a 'holy, prayed-in place', and frequently say so.

Needs – On a practical note, private prayer might be encouraged by the provision of an enclosed area, reserved for the purpose. This is being progressed. There is a suggestion that we might address the ministry of wholeness and healing. The church has no organised Bible Study or Prayer Group, and this is felt to be a need.

5. Confident and sensitive evangelism

Strengths – Together with the people of St Mary's, our glorious, beautiful, inspiring, famous, historically important, Grade I listed, church building, whose 'stones speak louder than words' is our greatest asset, and we have built on this by opening the church every weekday lunch time since July 2009. Our Saturday 'Open Door' scheme, with widely advertised opening times, has been sustained for over 30 years and has recently been extended to include the working week as well as Saturdays. The church is widely used for Cultural, Civic and Community activities, – for example, the Early Music and Castle Park Festivals - and in total we welcome some 5000 visitors each year from all over the world. To support this, there is a good Church Guidebook, foreign

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

St Mary de Castro has been a focal point in the City Centre for nine hundred years; it celebrated its 900th Anniversary in 2007. As its name suggests, the church was founded to serve Leicester Castle, with a Dean and Canons. Within a century of its foundation the southward expansion of the town led to the church taking on parish work. The huge south aisle of the church building was, in fact, a separate parish church. The influence of the Duchy of Lancaster and subsequently the Crown led to the completion of the magnificent church building in which we worship to-day.

Until the 19th century, the parish extended into open country, south and west of the town. The first daughter church, Holy Trinity, was built in 1838. From then until well into the 20th century a succession of parishes – St Andrew's, St Paul's, The Martyrs, All Souls, Holy Apostles and St Anne's – have been formed from St Mary's. In setting them up, the Parish Church has been an active partner.

From after World War I the parish consisted of small residential properties with a number of worsted and knitting factories, a brewery and going up into the City a slice of office development. The Vicar was also Chaplain to Leicester Technical College and to Trinity Hospital almshouse.

In the second half of the 20th century massive changes took place. First, the Inner Ring Road tore through the parish, severing the natural physical connection with the City Centre. It razed residential and commercial properties alike. Then the Technical College became in turn the Polytechnic and now De Montfort University, whose massive development all but erased the residential element. This was to some extent reversed by the regeneration of Bede Island and also the Westbridge development and ever-increasing student accommodation in the closing years of the century and in the present one. There is one street of shops, Braunstone Gate, and adjacent wholesale outlets. There are a number of corner-shops.

The historic heritage core of Leicester concentrates on Castle Park, and is particularly expressed in St Mary's Church, frequently referred to as "The Jewel of Leicester", the adjacent Castle and the beautiful Castle Gardens. The Grand Union Canal flows through the centre of the parish.

Our Christian neighbours are St Andrew, Jarrom Street, with whom we have an especially warm relationship; St Nicholas (where our Vicar was also Priest-in-Charge for five years). Both these churches are part of the Holy Spirit Parish. Our other neighbours are St Martin's Cathedral to the East, and St Paul's and The Martyrs to the West. The Roman Catholic Church of St Peter is just off the parish boundary to the West; and the Jain Centre is situated beyond the Inner Ring Road. St Mary's belongs to and shares in the life of Christians Together in Leicester.

The churchmanship of St Mary's is distinctly Traditional Catholic. There are two main Sunday Services. The 11.00 a.m. Mass uses Common Worship, Traditional Language, Service 1. In selecting the texts for this, the forms used in The Book of Common Prayer were preferred. The 6.30 p.m. Choral Evensong uses the Book of Common Prayer. Both are fully choral, a number of settings being in use. The morning Mass has an attendance of 30-55, Evensong 15 -20. The figures vary seasonally and occasional and special services have attracted two to three hundred worshippers. There are weekday Masses on Tuesday evening and Friday lunchtime.

Current Ministry situation:

Mr David Lamb was licensed in 2005 and offers a valuable ministry appropriate to his Office. He also travels extensively and has been able to work as a Reader in Italy with appropriate permission. He has a special attachment to Hospital visiting and Chaplaincy work.

Mr Terry Doughty (Sacristan) although not licensed to a ministry in the parish is nationally influential as the Secretary-General of the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary and on the Council of the Guild of All Souls, and exercises a valuable local ministry in and out of the parish in consequence.

There are eight members of the congregation authorised to administer the Chalice.

We have been extremely fortunate during the interregnum following the retirement of Fr. David Cawley to enjoy the enthusiastic assistance of several priests of our integrity.

MISSION AUDIT

1. Transformed lives and communities

Strengths – We are a faithful community existing primarily for the traditional worship of God, but also engaged in ministry to the various other communities which call on our services as a city centre church.

Needs – We recognise that we must be open to **appropriate** change. But not change for change's sake.

2. Worship that renews and inspires

Strengths – Worship is regular, with Sung Mass (Common Worship Order 1, Traditional Language – own Service Books) and BCP Choral Evensong, every Sunday. There are several weekday services, including a Friday lunchtime service. Our traditional, Anglo-Catholic worship is God-centred, dignified, orderly, and reverent, with the highest possible standards of ceremonial and music, meeting the needs of those looking for something 'slightly different'. There is a devoted core of regular worshippers, a substantial and dedicated Serving team, a small, but capable and loyal, robed, SATB Choir, and a skilled band of Bell Ringers (supported by some Cathedral Ringers – a long-standing, existing '*Mission Partnership*'). Servers, Choir and Ringers enjoy experienced leadership. There is a very high standard of flower arrangements. A Loop System and Public Address System is installed.

3. Self-giving service to the community

Strengths - The church serves a number of different communities –

A **Worshipping Community** - largely eclectic, with several nationalities and ethnic groupings represented.

De Montfort University – the church is occasionally used as a venue for University events – including concerts, and some services. Although St Mary's is not the University Church, some students choose to worship with us.

language Guide Notes, Christian literature, an excellent Parish Magazine, a Church Website and an enthusiastic team of caterers. Our services are advertised both locally and nationally.

To ensure our church building remains the asset it is, it is carefully maintained and kept in good condition. This is wonderfully supported by The Friends of St Mary's, with some 160 members, including a few of different faiths or of no faith, and with the encouragement of His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, and a number of other distinguished patrons. The Friends have their own Newsletter and special events.

Needs – We wish to 'turn visitors into pilgrims'. On the practical front we would like to provide a proper 'Welcome Area', with a professional display of a wider range of literature, visual aids, and exhibitions. We also badly need improved toilet and catering facilities. These things are being progressed. However, in all this we recognise that we will not grow in number unless these initiatives are accompanied by confident and sensitive evangelism, and this will need nurturing.

6. Lifelong Christian Nurture

Strengths - . In 2010 we held a series of Tuesday evening Lent courses which included a visit to the Holy Cross Convent, Rempstone and also guest speakers on Vocations.

Needs – We recognise that there needs to be an increased emphasis on teaching the fundamentals of faith to enable us to respond confidently to the challenging questions raised by non-believers and by those of other faiths. This has been noted and partly actioned.

7. The welcome of newcomers

Strengths - We try and give a sensitive, warm welcome to all visitors at Services. Many remark on our being a "very friendly church". There is a special 'Newcomers Welcome Leaflet', and we are aware of and alive to the needs of newcomers, not least that of privacy. There are facilities for the disabled. We hold various social occasions throughout the year.

Needs - Being a City Centre Church, many of our 'Newcomers' are in fact visitors 'passing through'. But there is a need to identify and support the