

**Presentation to Brother George**  
**on celebrating 40 years of ministry at St Thomas à Becket church, Cliffe**  
**Sunday 4th October 2020**  
**by Fr. Herbert Bennett and**  
**presentation by Canon Richard Moatt, late Rector of Lewes**

**A**LTHOUGH I am so newly joining the church community here at St Thomas à Becket it is with much pleasure that I am sharing with you the celebration of Brother George's 40 years of ministry here at St Thomas'. However, I have been given much background information with affection from you all.

The Reverend George Linnegar pursued theological training at Kelham Theological College and was ordained Deacon in 1962 and then priested the next year in 1963. Following this he was a member of the Community of the Glorious Ascension and so earned the title by which we all know him to be – Brother George. Brother George then served his ministry in Peterborough, Lichfield, Bath and Wells before coming to Lewes in 1980.

In Lewes he became Honorary Curate to the parishes of All Saints, St Anne's, St Michael's and St Thomas at Cliffe and continued in that post until 1999 when he retired but thereafter has continued to serve with Permission to Officiate, as he does now.

In the life here at St Thomas à Becket his outstanding witness in ministry to God has been his daily early morning Eucharist, coupled with midday prayer with Evening Prayer. It is this dedicated witness to ministry together with his committed pastoral care over 40 years that is at the forefront of our thanksgiving to him and to God which we all celebrate here today.

In reflection of these 40 years I am reliably informed from members of the congregation about some of the anecdotal memories which detail Brother George's ministry here at St Thomas à Becket.

Of his pastoral care Brother George had a motor bike and apparently would use that to visit people who were at home outside the parish or in hospital, when distance was too great to walk. However, locally within the parish he would walk everywhere and thus be seen and known by the community. I am told Brother George would stop to meet people in the street and thus form connections with them, whether or not they happened to be members of the congregation. Also visiting them in hospital when he heard of them being ill. So it was natural that such affection towards Brother would grow enormously from many people around him.

As a person I understand he loved playing cricket and football. In addition he has a fine sense

of humour and one parishioner remembers when his humour and sporting interest combined and on seeing one particular parishioner across the street would throw a ball to him, as if in a sporting match, much to the amusement of them both!

As to the church of St Thomas' and of his love towards it I am told that Brother George would always be very supportive of any restoration projects that were afoot and in particular supported enthusiastically and involved himself in the 1994 – 2000 restoration appeal which had been initiated by Barry Keaton, the Rector of St Anne's. More personally, it is a very touching thought that Brother George's daily routine winding of the ancient church clock is a measure of his timed commitment to the very fabric of the church.

In addition Brother George sought to support concerts and musical events but was always mindful that others knew and respected that St Thomas' is a House of God first and foremost. Such is his loyalty to worship of God. To this end he also was pleased to welcome the Russian Orthodox to come and worship amongst us here too which is clearly a mutual blessing to all.

These just give us a lovely semblance of Brother George's time here, although I am sure there are many, many others to be heard.

As to some final thoughts. At the centre of Brother George's worship is his love of the Book of Common Prayer and its liturgy which is central to the worshipful life of St Thomas'. Whilst I am licensed to be here for the Sunday Parish Eucharist I am so grateful to Brother George for his continuing the weekday services which are such a vital witness to the community.

His dedicated service in ministry is to both the congregation and the community for which we all thank him so very much. 40 years in one parish is an astonishing witness to God. In reflection of that we might say that Brother George is 'halfway to Heaven'. May God continue to bless him.

Amen.

Fr Herbert.

***The gifts –***

*Icon of St Thomas à Becket from Canterbury, in recognition of our church and its founding roots.*

*Also two books : 'The lily of the field and the bird of the air' and 'Three Godly Discourses and Papers, journals'. Both are by the author Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian, whom Brother George much admires.*