



May Devotion

Saturday 21st May 2011



The month of May is Mary's month, a month of May Crownings, of processions, of the rosary and a time for reading the Sacred Scripture. So, on a chilly and cloudy (but thankfully dry) May Saturday the church of St James the Great, Haydock, held its annual May Devotion. I can honestly say that the day was particularly enlightening and it was an experience which proved particularly thought-provoking in many ways.

The day started at noon with the Sung Eucharist; the sermon was by the Very Reverend Justin Welby, Dean of Liverpool. Music was provided by the choral group *Ex Choro* under its Musical Director Howard Barlow, and the setting for the Eucharist was taken from the Communion Service in F by Harold Darke (1888-1976).



After communion the Procession of Our Lady began and everybody joined in, walking behind the beautiful sight of the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham being carried on her bier, adorned with flowers arranged by Fr Robin Pettitt our



Cell treasurer. The procession was a powerful act of witness to our love of Mary. At the end of the service we sang the *Regina Caeli*.

Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven.
Alleluia!
He whom Thou wast meet to bear.
Alleluia!
As He promised hath arisen.
Alleluia!
Pour for us to God thy prayer.
Alleluia!

V. Rejoice and be glad,
O Virgin Mary,
Alleluia.

R. For the Lord is risen indeed,
Alleluia.



An excellent “free lunch” was provided by the members of the local Cell of Our Lady of Walsingham - and of course the wine flowed freely!

After lunch, we returned to the church for the service of Benediction in the Lady Chapel. The Dean gave a short but very thought-provoking address.

Towards the end of the hymn which followed everybody knelt as our Cell Superior and Parish Priest, Fr Rodney Middleton, brought the Blessed Sacrament to the altar.



His shoulders covered with the Humeral Veil, Fr Rodney took the monstrance in his hands and made the sign of the cross over the kneeling congregation. With the candles lit and Our Lady watching over us this benediction was a very moving experience.



I am so very grateful to both Fr Rodney and Fr Robin Pettitt for all their hard work in making this a wonderful day for us all. My thanks go also to the visiting clergy, to the cell members and to members of the congregation for all their help and support. Thankfully everything went according to plan!

Mary can achieve so much through her prayers. May our love of her draw us together and make us more effective witnesses to the Gospel.

Yours in prayer,

Dot Beesley

*Secretary
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