

Fr. Jeremy Rigden grew up in and around Weston-Super-Mare. He went to St. Brendan's College in Bristol in the days when it was a Boys' Grammar School, run by Irish Christian Brothers. After A Levels, he spent a gap year in Spain and France before going to St. Catherine's College, Oxford, to study Modern Languages (Spanish and French). Before Finals, he applied to the Diocese of Clifton and was accepted as a student for the Priesthood. Bishop Joseph Rudderham sent him to the English College, Valladolid, Spain in 1973.

He was ordained in his home parish of Burnham-on-Sea in 1978 and took up his first appointment as Assistant Priest at Clifton Cathedral. In 1983 he returned to the English College in Spain where he served as Vice-Rector for six years. In 1989, Bishop Mervyn Alexander asked him to be his Secretary and Vocations Director, appointments which he held until 1992. Fr. Jeremy then asked for a year's sabbatical leave, which he spent at the Institute of St Anselm in Margate.

In 1993, he became Parish Priest at St. Gerard's, in Knowle, Bristol; in 1998 he was sent as parish Priest to St. Gregory's in Cheltenham; and in 2004 as Parish Priest to Holy Family Parish in Swindon until 2012. In 2001, Bishop Mervyn retired and was succeeded by Bishop Declan Lang. Bishop Declan then appointed Fr. Jeremy as one of two Vicars General, a post from which he stepped down when he came to St. Mary's in Bath in 2012.

A Parishioner's Tribute to Fr Jeremy:

"Monsignor Canon Jeremy Rigden V.G. has been our Parish Priest here at Holy Family for the past 8 years. Sadly, he is now to leave us, and will be moving on to St. Mary's parish in Bath. (Lucky people). Well, what kind of Priest has Father Jeremy been for us in Holy Family? I have talked to quite a number of parishioners, whose comments have been "always has time for you; so kind; a great sense of humour; and a good holy priest". But more than all of this, people have told me about their personal experiences, he is there with consolation, understanding and most of all in a deeply prayerful, spiritual and calming way. He has an ability to listen, which helps to make him the counsellor that he is, helping the bereaved, those with family problems, the sick and their families. What is Father Jeremy leaving behind for us? He has revived the Parish. We now have a battalion of altar servers, compared with when he arrived. Our Masses resonate with musical prayer, Father Jeremy having encouraged Pat Langley-Pool and her award winning choir, into our liturgies. Mass attendances have increased, more people have been received into the Church, and we have a strengthening relationship with the school. On a personal reflection, my journey into the Catholic Church has been made so much easier, and my faith has been greatly deepened, through the preparation, teaching and patience, which Father Jeremy has given to me and I know that there are others of you that have had this wonderful experience too. Father, we thank you for heeding the call of the Holy Spirit and dedicating your life to the priesthood. For without you 2 Father, and your fellow priests we would not be able to receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for preparing us, and administering the Sacraments to us, for baptising our children, through their first Holy Communion and Confirmation, the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Matrimony, Anointing the Sick and helping the final journey of our loved ones. This parish has been blessed by the

wonderful pastoral care that you have given us all, and for all of this we thank you Father. May God Bless you and keep you and continue to sustain and guide you."
Paul Thompson is a parishioner at Holy Family in Swindon