

Mandy Hughes

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Name: Mandy Hughes

Age: 63

Original Home Village, Town or City: BRIGHTON

The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving: St Michael's Hoole

If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry? Service Manager NHS Wales

In one word, how would you describe what ordination means to you? Life

Please give some insight (a few sentences) about your ordination decision? Ordination for me has not really been my decision. I have pushed the doors following a call to Ministry and they continued to open leading me through the discernment process to the conclusion, that Gods plan for me in my later years was to Ordination as a Priest. Knowing that this was the "right" decisions has given me a sense of wonder and awe, at what God can do at any age and any time in life.

What inspired you most during your ordination training? Community. The emphasis on a diverse, pastorally robust, sensitive, worshipping and inspiring community at Emmanuel College, that truly has started to transform me as a disciple and prepared me to inhabit the role of Priest.
I was inspired by the level of teaching which was consistently high and the dedication of all of the staff both teaching and support. It was an unforgettable 2 years which I loved.

What are some of the personal challenges and opportunities you face in your ministry in the coming year?

The transition from Deacon to Priest, and the expectations of the Congregation. The number of hours that I have available to run a whole Parish and being able to maintain a balance, to take the time for family and friends and my own spiritual growth.

As a third Order Franciscan, I live by a rule of life and this involves time for retreat, and participation in the Franciscan Community.

I am also a Trustee of a Charity I set up in 1991, which also needs time.

Share some thoughts (a few sentences for each point) about how you will support the Bishop in achieving these aims, and also how you will encourage others to do the same?

I wholeheartedly believe that Children and Young People are the heart of our Ministry. They are an integral part of our Church community and we must make their place our Priority.

As Christians, it should be "default" that Justice is part of our existence. As a Franciscan, Justice is part of our principles and on-going formation as it should be in our Church.

Searching out and looking outwards to the community beyond Church walls to serve and bring Gods Gospel of life and hope to all. As we are commissioned.

Please share some insights about what you personally and/or your church may be doing online; particularly anything innovative and successful you have done that other churches may be able to replicate.

We have quite a high profile on our social media platforms, and we livestream some services. We hope to increase our presence by investing in the technology to offer services etc.. on line for those who are unable to attend Church. Also to be able to offer more services to couples for weddings etc..

However, this does not replace the personal effort that we should be making to build relationships and invite people to the Family of God.

Tell us about your family/ loved ones:

I am a Widow of 7 years, my late husband was also a Priest, and for a time in the Parish where I serve. I am living in the Rectory now where I have lived before! he would be amused!

I have 2 grown up Children, both are married with children. My Daughter lives in Austria with her 2 boys and husband, my Son here locally with his son. I have 4 Grandchildren all boys. Sadly we lost baby number 4 this year, he was stillborn. The Grief for his mum and dad and brother is still raw and we are all supporting each other. I come from Brighton and still have a sister and Mother living there, my father recently died. I share my home with a very large black Greyhound who I adore. I have some very special friends who are an extension to my family and I love them very much.

What do you do in your free time?

Meet with Friends, visit my daughter in Vienna, try to spend some time out of the Parish, meet with my family here in UK. Relax and I like to watch good boxsets and films and chill with my dog. I also board other Greyhounds for their holidays.

Tell us something people don't know about you that might surprise them?

When I lived in Romania in the 1990s I regularly appeared on a Christian Radio Station. I have done community radio here in the UK in Kent and appeared on Romanian TV.

I also smuggled bibles with Open Doors in 1988