***The Divine***

***Infant of Prague***

***Church***

Thank You!

Dear parishioners, families, friends and everyone from Saint Margaret Clitherow Academy,

As your Parish Priest, I write this letter with a heart full of sadness and a mind full of hope!

I am not going to use names, for fear that I miss someone out. To all of your loved ones who have gone before you to their eternal reward and who put so much passion, energy, love, money and prayer into the life of this church and made it such a sacred, warm and loving place for us to worship God and safely practise our faith; we owe each and everyone of them a deep debt of gratitude. Their memories will live on in us their priests, families and friends.

To all of you, men, women and children who have kept the flame of faith alive in this beautiful church of The Divine Infant of Prague until this present moment, God will bless you abundantly and reward you for all the passion, love and dedication you have shown him down through the years. Your tireless praise and love of him will not go unnoticed. Your reward will be **mighty**. Until that day comes, continue to serve Jesus and his sisters and brothers you meet every day of your Christian journey!

**A brief history of the Life of The Divine Infant of Prague**

Whereas the Bestwood Estate was developed during the 1930s, Bestwood Park Estate was not built until the late 1950s and early 1960s. From 1956 Fr. BernardAllen of Hucknall said Mass in the Bestwood Hotel. In the early 1960s Father Francis Lang, one of the priests of Bulwell, began to visit the houses on this new estate to ascertain how many Catholics there were and how their needs might be met. In December 1963 three thousand square yards of land were purchased from Nottingham City Council with the intention of eventually building a church, parish hall, presbytery and school. Two years later, a church hall on Cherry Orchard Mount was opened in which Mass was said on Sundays by one of the priests from Bulwell, and every Sunday afternoon there was a Novena and Holy Hour. By 1967 there were two Sunday Masses; and in 1968 the Chapel of Ease was given the name “Infant of Prague”. In 1971 Father Michael Eastwood became the first parish priest of the new parish of Infant of Prague, Bestwood Park – and his address (since the presbytery adjacent to the church dates only from the early 1980s) was Mosswood Crescent! Although a ‘church’ as such was never built, the church hall was extended in 1978 to form a sanctuary, day chapel, sacristies and confessional. Thus, as has so often happened, the original dream of church, presbytery, parish hall and school has not been able to be realised in its entirety – but the Faith lives on even in small congregations.

The first phase of St. Margaret Clitherow Primary School with accommodation for one hundred and sixty pupils was built, in the space of eight months, and opened in November 1970. The official opening by Bishop Ellis took place in July 1971. Over the years, there were further developments and, in October 2012, St Margaret Clitherow School became an Academy and part of the Pax Christi Multi Academy Trust.