

## **ST MARY'S PARISH**

The present church of St Mary's was built through the efforts of Canon Philip Kearney, P.P. 1821-1856. The church was designed by Ignatius Bonomi, the Durham County Architect. As the Mother church of Wearside it served a large area of North east Durham, and several parishes have since been formed in this area, once covered by this one church.

The Parish covers an area extending from Wearmouth Bridge in the North to Essen Way/bordering Leechmere Road in the South and from Sans Street/Gray Road in the East to Durham Road in the West. The Parish has a congregation of approximately 1600 and a Mass attendance of approximately 500. In recent years it has been served by two clergy - a parish priest and an assistant. Occasionally deacons, priests under training are seconded and priests from abroad join the team for a while.

The parish consists of the church, presbytery, parish centre as well as St Mary's Primary School and two Secondary Schools, St Aidan's and St Anthony's. The main Religious order in the parish is the Sisters of Mercy. The activities taking place are listed elsewhere and involve a significant number of parishioners.

St Mary's is part of the Deanery of St Bede which often organises joint parish events, for instance Days of Recollection, training days and similar activities. The Ecumenical links with sister churches - e.g. City Centre Churches Together - are strong with pulpit exchanges and groups involved with city charitable activities.