

**SUBMISSION ON THE REASONS FOR THE CLOSURE OF
OUR LADY QUEEN HEAVEN, ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,
DURRINGTON
BY THE PARISH PRIEST THE REV.P.BRANDON**

The Roman Catholic Parish of Christ the King, Amesbury, in the Diocese of Clifton covers an area approximately the size of the Isle of Wight.

In 1962, the then Parish Priest of this Parish, the late Canon Whelan, had a plan to divide the Parish and establish another Parish with a church at Durrington as its centre.

He set about making his plan a reality and so the church of Our Lady Queen of Heaven was built and opened in 1964.

However further research made it obvious that in fact it would not be feasible to establish a new Parish – it would simply not be viable. So the plan was dropped. Incidentally the plans for the church at Durrington show a plan for a presbytery, which would have been the residence of the Parish Priest of the new Parish, but this was never completed.

From 1964 until its closure in 2003, the church of Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Durrington was simply a Chapel of Ease (ie. a church without a resident Priest) in the Parish of Amesbury. It was used as a Mass Centre.

It was maintained at an ever-increasing cost to the Parish and as such was a heavy drain on the finances of the Parish.

The congregation attending it varied from 18 to 30, the average attendance was 24, and a Mass count was taken every Sunday.

The income from the congregation, half of whom lived outside Durrington, amounted to a very small percentage of the cost of maintaining the building and grounds.

The financial factor was not the only reason bringing about the church's closure, or though it was a major consideration, other factors played a part too. All of them converged to regrettably bring about its permanent closure.

Other factors were the review ordered by the competent church authority into the number of Priests in each Deanery of the Diocese and the number of Masses celebrated by those Priests on Sundays and the Saturday evening anticipated Masses and the number of Mass centres in operation.

With the falling number of Priests, the findings of the review led to a reduction of Masses said in every Deanery.

Christ the King Parish, which is part of the Salisbury Deanery, was allocated two weekend Masses, one the anticipated Mass on Saturday evening, the second on Sunday morning both to be celebrated at the Parish Church of Christ the King, Amesbury.