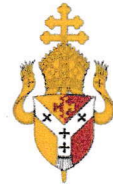




THE ARCHDIOCESE of BIRMINGHAM
GUILD OF SAINT STEPHEN

· Cui Servire Regnare Est ·



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Friday, 7th July 2023

Dear Mgr. Michael,

Thank you for your recent e-mail. Alongside my role as Vocations Director in the Archdiocese, I have the great joy of being the Diocesan Director of the Guild of St Stephen, an international organisation of Altar Servers, founded in Westminster in 1904.

It is wonderful to hear about the many dedicated parishioners who have been part of your parish's history since its early beginnings. I was particularly interested to hear about Mr Joseph Rush who has been a loyal Altar Server for 80 years, starting at the time of his First Holy Communion at St Anne's in Caversham. In addition to serving at Holy Mass, he has eagerly supported the many priests who have served your parish.

Being an Altar Server at Holy Mass when Joseph started was not as straightforward as it is today, particularly as the present site began as a 'shed', before being replaced by a brick-built hall, and finally your present church. As a builder, I am sure that Joseph helped in more ways than just serving at Holy Mass!

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Joseph's commitment – alongside many others – as a loyal and dedicated Altar Server. I am reliably informed that even though Joseph isn't on the rota, he is always happy to step forward and serve whenever he needs to. Your commitment, Joseph, to your parish and to your faith makes you an inspirational role model to the younger Altar Servers in your parish. I am thrilled to hear that Joseph is being enrolled today into the Guild of Saint Stephen – it may be seventy-nine years late – but it is certainly something to be celebrated. Thank you for your dedication and for your service!

With my prayers and every good wish to you and your parishioners.

God bless,

Rev. Fr C. Szmids BA STB
Diocesan Director for the Guild of St Stephen