**Father Michael Lambert**It is my privilege as Secretary of Churches Together in Hitchin to share in these words of appreciation for Father Michael.

Father Michael loved Churches Together in Hitchin and in turn members of all the 16 churches in the town loved him. The news of his accident and subsequent death was greeted with deep sadness and sincere prayer in the different congregations. In my own church, St Mark’s Church of England, there was an audible gasp when our Vicar announced what had happened, and people afterwards told stories of his preaching visits to our church in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and their `bless your heart’ encounters with him in the street or in their homes. The overwhelming feeling was one of great affection.

The reason for this was simple. Father Michael was a fine Catholic priest and was of course aware of the history of division between the various Christian traditions. More importantly however, he was conscious that what united us in faith was much greater than what separated us. He believed very firmly that whoever sought to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and lived out the love of God in the world was a sister or a brother in the Gospel.

In that spirit, he supported Churches Together in Hitchin in any way he could. He attended its Council meetings, he shared in the gatherings of ministers, he took part in our united services, at one of these he became the first Catholic priest since the Reformation to preside at a Eucharist in St Mary’s Parish Church, he walked proudly with us through the town in our Good Friday Act of Witness and he rode a (stationary) bike in the High Street with great enthusiasm to raise funds for our schools worker project. He chaired Churches Together in 2007 and though his style of chairing was, shall we say, unusual, we had great meetings and got things done.

A faithful Assumptionist, a fine priest, an excellent colleague and a good personal friend to my wife and myself. We will all miss him. As individuals and congregations, we give thanks for him, we rejoice that he is now at peace, and, faithful to his memory, we dedicate ourselves to the service of Christ in the church, in our beloved town and in the world.

John Richardson, Secretary of Churches Together in Hitchin