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Meet a Priest with a Punch by David Smith

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What has fists of steel, a kick like a mule, the head of a fox and a heart of gold? Answer â€" Fighting Father Dave, the black belt who is throwing down the gauntlet to the â€œproblem guysâ€• of the Inner Wes

Father Dave is the Rev David Smith, parish priest of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Duiwich Hill, and one of the good guys, ready to tie on the gloves and take on all corners for a cause.

This man of the cloth has taken Sharmanâ€™s Boxing Troupe four steps further by issuing a five-round challenge to anyone who thinks he can go the distance

The challenge is to step into the ring for rounds in boxing, kickboxing, judo, wrestling and hapkido.

Hapkido, for those foolhardy souls willing to try it, takes in all of the other sports, so you wouldnâ€™t want to be on the losing end.

If you can beat Father Dave at his own games, heâ€™ll shout you dinner after the fight.

If you lose, you have to turn up at church next week, which Father Dave reckons makes you a winner anyway.

Now might be a good time to try your luck. The good padre is sporting a few bruises and aches from taking on young blokes 15 years his junior in the ring.

Whatâ€™s it all about? The fists of steel and kick like a mule are easy enough to figure out (unless you are a non-believer, in which case put him to the test).

Father Dave has the head of a fox because he has worked out how to use his skills in a novel way to attract young people to his facilities at the church hall. He has a heart of gold because he cares passionately about every last soul on his patch of earth.

Besides being a parish-priest, which most would say is work enough. Father Dave is instructor of the Dulwich Hill Hapkido Club. He is also handy with the gloves and is a second dan black belt.

â€œI recently had my first amateur kickboxing fight, which I won,â€• he said.

â€œYou could say this is all just a publicity stunt, but the long-term goal is to make our facilities more available to young people in the area. We have a full weights gym/fitness centre here, which operates in the church hail each afternoon.â€•

â€œIâ€™m keen to get as many of the â€˜problem guysâ€™ off the street and into something constructive possible.â€•

Hey, you get no argument from me, Father. Go for it.

Father Dave has a youth centre, coffee shop, table tennis and basketball facilities, as well as the gym, for any teenager, male or female, who wants to drop in.

â€œWeâ€™ve been trying to get the young people in here for three years. Itâ€™s so frustrating. We really believe we can do so much if theyâ€™ll give us the chance,â€• he said,

Ah yes. You want to know how to enter the hell-fire and brimstone of Father Daveâ€™s challenge? Just turn up with your seconds at the church hall, 2 Herbert Street, Dulwich Hill on Sundays at 6 pm, or register your challenge at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church on 9569 1255.

Want to just watch? Turn up anyway. Father Dave offers sweat and work if you want it or a cup of coffee and a laugh if you donâ€™t.

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David Smith - About Author:
'Fighting Father' Dave - Parish Priest, Community Worker, Professional boxer, Martial Arts master, Father of three. Dave's goal is to offer an alternative culture for young people, based on values of courage, integrity, self-discipline and teamwork. He is available to help work your corner as you fight the good fight. Visit a http://www.fatherdave.org for more information.

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