



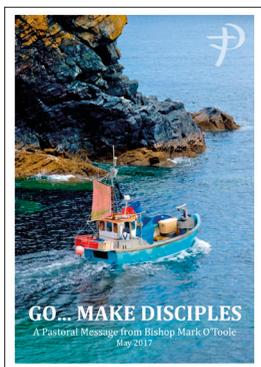
All Saints Parish

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2017

Since we met at last year's AGM to discuss progress on the 'big six' concerns raised by the Parish Survey of 2015, a lot has been happening in ALL SAINTS PARISH.

Before we look in more detail at some of these things, it seems useful to consider the wider context within which we as a community find ourselves situated, and within which we come together to worship and practice our faith. Our bishop, Mark O'Toole,



in the introduction to his recent pastoral letter, 'Go... make disciples', underpinned his thoughts by reflecting upon what he describes as a 'Crisis of Disciples.' He starkly articulates it thus – In the last 30 years the number of people regularly attending Mass in a Catholic Church has almost halved.

Across the Diocese the figures have gone down from 26½ to just under 14 thousand. This, he likens to the situation one finds in 'mission territories' such as Pakistan and Myanmar (Burma).

In contrast to this, the bishop is also keen to remind us that our desire to share our faith – to evangelise – is driven not primarily by numbers, but by joy, wellbeing, and the spiritual nourishment we derive from being followers of Christ. We should, therefore, most definitely not be cast down by this state of affairs. For us as a community, the big events in our liturgical calendar have been beautiful, inspirational, and well attended; every Mass we go to brings us a little closer to each other and to God. The Parish Calendar is brimming with events both within the parish and beyond, whether local or diocesan, ecumenically based or more broadly focused. We do not, in short, need to struggle to find ways to nurture our faith. Our consciences might be telling us, however, that there is, perhaps, still scope for us to find new ways to reach out and share the 'Joy of the Gospel'.

As a parish, we find ourselves very much in the same position as the Diocese in general, and indeed in the same position as the Church in the developed world as a whole; under-funded, looking for ways to consolidate our physical situation, whilst striving to maintain and nurture an outward looking faith responding optimistically to our calling.

Over the past year the Parish Pastoral Council has continued to address the 'Big Six' survey concerns, but has been particularly focused on **ENCOURAGING THE YOUNG**, and then **FUNDING THE MISSION**, a big part of which has been and will continue for some while to be, the care of our buildings. **WELCOMING**, meanwhile, goes from strength-to-strength and it has been very encouraging to see more-and-more people get involved in this vital ministry and other supporting roles around and during the Mass.

CARING FOR EACH OTHER, through the work of our fledgling Society of St Vincent de Paul, necessarily occurs mainly 'under-the-radar', but they have been meeting regularly, visiting the housebound, bringing people to Mass, distributing gifts of food at Christmas and Easter, and even (shockingly in this day and age) providing food vouchers where needed. They have also been offering support to the bereaved and taking people who need transport to medical appointments.

HOW WE WORSHIP is now more properly taken care of by the Liturgy Group who meet to look at all aspects of the Liturgy including Music, which increases in vibrancy, and continues to be a dynamic and developing part of our Sunday Mass.

HOW WE GROW IN FAITH is now part of the remit of the Evangelisation Team, who are currently engaged with an initiative developed by the Diocese, responding in turn to the Church's call for a 'New Evangelisation'.

ENCOURAGING THE YOUNG to identify with their faith and with the parish community is surely a key part of our evangelising mission, and unsurprisingly, in the context of Bishop Mark's letter, presents us with one of our biggest challenges. Nevertheless, volunteers within our parish are putting a great deal of time and energy into events for young people, whether liturgical, in conjunction with the school, or beyond the confines of the parish. Through the year young people from our community have taken part in larger events as diverse as World Youth Day in Kraków, Poland; more locally, the Diocesan Youth Rally in Honiton (17 attending), and then 'Flame 2017', the national gathering of Catholic young people at Wembley Arena (11 young people from All Saints). There has been cross-denominational activity, and numerous parish-based opportunities like the Wo-We Pop-Up Cinema.

On 14 May, twelve of our young people received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Mark at Our Lady and St Patrick's church, then four of our children took their First Holy Communion on 25 June. Follow up events for those confirmed have taken place, and our young people have of course been participating in regular events open to the whole parish, such as the Wintershall Weekend and later in the year, the Treyarnon weekend, where we take over a Cornish youth hostel for a weekend of prayer and celebration, and spend time together as a community. Huge thanks to this team of volunteers for all their hard and determined work in supporting the younger members of our community. Congratulations and continued thanks also to Our Lady and St Patrick's Roman Catholic Nursery and Primary School, our Parish School, who are now officially 'good in all areas' after their successful Ofsted inspection earlier in the year (we knew it already!).

Turning away now from these positive and affirmative thoughts, we come to the interconnected and deeply intractable topics of Finance and Buildings (many thanks to the Finance Committee and the Buildings Team, for all their hard work). Hopefully, by now, there are very few of us who are unaware that in this respect we are facing significant and serious challenges as we move forward.

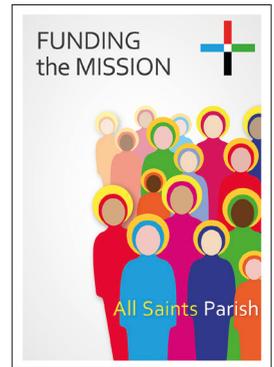
Latest figures are as follows:

- Last financial year, 2016/17, our parish cost £95,000 to run
- our income was £79,000 given by parishioners and £5,000 sundry
- our 'operating' result was, therefore, a deficit of £(11,000)
- we also spent £(53,000) on our buildings
- and received £14,000 investment income.
- **The final cash result of this was a deficit of £(50,000).**

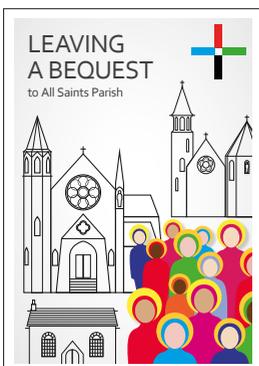
- For 2017/18 our parish is forecast to cost £(98,000) to run
- our income is projected to be £83,000 given by parishioners & £5,000 sundry
- our 'operating' result will therefore be a deficit of £(10,000)
- we also plan to spend at least £(150,000) on our buildings
- and we will receive about £8,000 investment income.
- **The final cash result of this will be a deficit of £(150,000).**

Our concern over these matters is so great that this year we undertook a sustained appeal to increase the amount that parishioners give to the parish, called 'FUNDING THE MISSION'; this with the ambitious objective of raising the amount we collectively give by £30,000 per year.

The campaign ran from the first Sunday in Advent 2016 to Palm Sunday 2017. Every church-going member of our community received an information leaflet on the subject, the appeal was publicised in the newsletter, on the parish website and via posters at our churches. Speakers talked to us after Mass and gave regular updates, volunteers stood at the back of our churches afterwards, ready to provide further information and answer questions. In short, it is extremely unlikely that anyone of our community would have been left uninformed of our financial situation or the need to significantly increase our income.



Since the appeal finished, we have closely monitored changes in the pattern of giving, and while we are pleased to report a modest upturn overall – and would wish absolutely to say a collective heartfelt thank you to all those who have increased the amount they give (even where it has simply been by signing up to Gift-aid their contribution) – it has to be very clearly stated that we are still a long way from resolving the financial difficulties we face.



A large part of the investments we retain, and which for the time being safeguard us against any unforeseen event, come from bequests made to the parish by past parishioners. The penultimate part of our strategy to reduce future financial shortfall, is to publish a leaflet to enable members of the community to consider leaving similar legacies to the parish in their wills.

Leaving a bequest does not necessarily mean leaving your whole estate. It is entirely possible to bequeath a certain amount or particular asset, a percentage, proportion or amount, or even make a 'residuary bequest' –

– i.e. the remainder after specific bequests to family members and others. If you can consider doing this, your legacy will help to ensure that our parish continues to thrive, and that those who come after us can continue to practice their faith and worship together as we do now. The leaflet will be promoted at the parish AGM and will be available afterwards at our three churches.

Beyond these practical measures, the PPC and the Finance Committee, acting in support of Fr Mark and the parish, feel that the next vital step to take will be to compile a report to the Diocese detailing our problematic financial situation, informing the Bishop of all the things that we have undertaken to try to alleviate it, and seeking guidance on the next steps.

The buildings that we own continue to be the focus of much expenditure from the limited resources we retain. During the past year we spent £53,000 on them, and we are committed to spending considerably more than this over the next few years. Structural works to complete the re-ordering of Our Lady and St Patrick's are still ongoing and many necessary minor works are taking place, such as endeavouring to ensure that hearing loops and sound systems work properly, minor exterior building repairs to other churches/presbyteries are attended to, etc. etc.

The largest project we have committed resources to is the renovation and repair of the presbytery of St Agatha's in Dawlish. Subsequent to its occupation by a priest from the Ordinariate and his family, we were approached, via a parishioner, by a Devon based group called 'Phoenix Learning & Care', who provide homes and care support for young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties with the aim of delivering a safe and therapeutic environment. Some parishioners may be familiar with their work at Oakwood Court College, in Dawlish. Do have a look at their website to find out more: **www.phoenixlearningcare.co.uk**

We have taken on this project because we felt it was very important to put the building to good use, and believe that the group's philosophy and objectives align well with our mission. Notwithstanding this, we have had to undertake considerable repairs to make the property serviceable for the duration, a task which has involved the Buildings

Committee and others in a lot of work, and of course considerable expenditure from our investments, amounting in total to some £70,000. We are currently negotiating a five year lease with the prospective tenants and hope to recoup most of our investment over the period. This – in contrast to most of our other buildings – will put the property in a ‘holding position’ whereby we can anticipate not having to consider spending much more on it during the period of the tenancy.

To summarise the past year would be to say, in modern parlance, that it has very much been ‘a game of two halves’. In terms of our community, our parish groups, teams and community are forging ahead, and many volunteers both unseen and visible are busy working to the benefit of us all (thank you indeed!). When we come to Mass we find comfort and are made to feel both welcome and a part of something infinitely greater than ourselves. We focus upon many things, the beauty of the liturgy, the profound truths revealed in the Word and reflected in the homily, our own personal concerns receive greater clarity and we pray for our troubled world. Somewhat in the background, however, but looming all around us as we pray, are our buildings, which are undoubtedly beautiful and a great blessing, but nevertheless present a continued and increasing challenge to our being able to go on as we are. Let us pray for good guidance and stewardship in these matters.

May the year ahead see our parish community continue to develop, strengthen expand and broaden its horizons, and more closely become the Kingdom in the here and now.

Have a good summer and God Bless,

With kind regards,

Simon Fletcher
Chair of All Saints PPC

