

# ALL SAINTS PARISH

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



**When I wrote last year's report, I summarised by saying that the past year for ALL SAINTS PARISH, TEIGNMOUTH, had very much been 'a game of two halves'.**

However, having now chaired the Parish Pastoral Council for a number of years, I realise that this story is very much a reflection of the way things are, not just for us, but also for other parishes of the Diocese and probably across most of the western world. For those who read that last report, or attended the last AGM, there will certainly be a sense of déjà-vu, as I return initially to what may now be familiar topics. I make no apology for doing so, since the financial concerns that have dominated my period in office, will sooner rather than later, have a profound impact upon the way we gather and worship.

As we will hear in this year's financial report to the parish AGM, from Raymond Twohig – the chair of our parish finance Committee, **we find ourselves needing to spend money at almost twice the speed that it is coming in.** Our annual income, in other words the money parishioners give to the parish doesn't even cover our overheads, let alone pay for the upkeep of our buildings. Our investments are therefore diminishing rapidly and these are our only resource to maintain what is to all intent and purpose, a rather extensive portfolio of buildings. **It now seems now quite inevitable that in the not too distant future, we will have insufficient reserves to maintain and upkeep our three churches, and ancillary buildings.** There are significant works scheduled, such as the rose window and other remedial works at St Agatha's, which are inevitably going to make serious inroads into what remains.

As a small mitigating factor, and as many parishioners will be aware, the presbytery at Dawlish has finally been leased out, which means that this building at least, will present no further drain on our capital for the next five years, a period during which we should recoup recent expenditure in getting the property up to scratch.

**What are we doing about this seemingly insurmountable problem?** Firstly, we must continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us towards a sustainable and meaningful solution. Then, as all parishioners must be aware, we ran an appeal last year to increase giving. This has been closely monitored and has resulted over the last twelve months in what must be considered, a modest upturn. This is all to the good, but does not go very far towards addressing the problem we face. In recent times, most of the building projects we have undertaken have been funded by legacies, and our next strategy was to publish a leaflet, available in all churches, encouraging people to think about leaving specific bequests to the parish.

Since then, and because a local solution has not been forthcoming, it has become necessary that we make the Diocese aware of our difficulties and to do this we took the initiative to write directly to Bishop Mark. The Bishop has so far been very positive in engaging with us in this matter and we are now in the early stages of discussion with the curia of the diocese, seeking to find a sustainable way forward for the parish. What this might look like is, as yet, very unclear.

**Returning to the positive**, our parish in terms of it's people, continues to move forward. Advent, Christmas, Lenten and Easter Liturgies were particularly beautiful this past year, and during Mass we continue to find great comfort and are made to feel both welcome and able to participate in something infinitely greater than ourselves.

The Parish Pastoral Council has, during this past year, placed great emphasis on supporting the younger members of the parish. Just as we are seeking ways to ensure the continuation of our physical resources, we also see it as vital to sustain and nurture the people of our community as we journey forward, and young people are the very embodiment of that future. A parish youth group, though formative, is nevertheless meeting regularly, and this is being guided very much by the group themselves, with some support from the 'Encouraging the Young' team. Children's Liturgy of the Word at OLSP seems to be building steadily, and it is incredibly encouraging to see the number of young families attending is increasing. This must surely be good for the perpetuation of our parish.

For the wider community, a new initiative is currently under way seeking to revitalise and energise our mission, based on the highly acclaimed book 'Divine Renovation', by Fr James Mallon. A dedicated group are meeting regularly and reflecting on the ideas he puts forward, seeking to find new ways to enthuse and engage us.

**As we move ahead** into the next parish year, the subject of 'succession' will become a dominant theme. A number of key players who have invigorated parish life through recent years and given much time, energy and devotion to the task, will be stepping down. Chris Bloor, who has been much involved through the years in supporting young people, who instigated the transformative Parish Survey we had back in 2014, and has enabled us to become a far more 'welcoming' church – particularly at OLSP. Having achieved and established a new model for this, she has now resigned her role so that she can spend more time with family and fully recharge her batteries. Raymond Twohig who has been our Chair of Finance for quite a number of years and steered us through all the convolutions of the reordering of OLSP, the letting of the Dawlish presbytery, numerous 'giving' and Gift Aid appeals, and many other financial wrangles and worries, will be standing down. Chris Clarke, our Sacristan, has also for some while taken the lead on maintaining and seeking to secure our buildings over the near term, and he feels that he will soon have things in sufficient order (after a substantial amount of work and planning) to hand the baton on to a successor. Carole Bryant has completed her term on the PPC, but will nonetheless I am sure, continue to support our Altar Servers alongside being deeply involved in all things liturgical. Finally, but not the least, Linda Clarke, who has been our parish secretary for some fifteen years, and kept her finger on the pulse of the parish, so-to-speak, has now taken a well-earned retirement.

We now welcome a new parish secretary, Jo Bowery, who will bring some new skills and ideas to the role, and it is my hope that her appointment will herald the beginning of a new phase in our parish life as we pray for fresh faces to come forward and volunteer to get involved, to lead us onward and revitalise our community.

**I hope and pray** that those who lead our community on the next stage of it's journey, supporting Fr Mark, will enable us to find a viable and more sustainable way forward. Ultimately, it has to be said, it is not buildings that matter. When we seek to focus our viewpoint, and deepen our understanding by attending to the Word, we come to know that it is people who are the stones that build our community; if we truly listen to and act upon Christ's message, our future parish, in whatever outward form it may take, will journey onwards and continue to thrive!

Wishing you all a good summer,

God Bless,

**Simon Fletcher**

**Chair of All Saints PPC**

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**ALL SAINTS PARISH**  
is a part of the  
Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Plymouth