

## St. Bernadette's Parish Pastoral Council Annual Report 2016-2017



**'A Parish Pastoral Council is a faith-filled leadership group through which priests and people work together as co-responsible partners in furthering the mission of Christ in their own parish.'**

*(Living Communion, Irish Episcopal Conference)*

Here in St. Bernadette's Parish, we are very fortunate to have an enthusiastic group of people in our Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) who work with Fr. Armstrong, in an advisory capacity, to further faith development. A prayerful atmosphere is crucial in all our meetings and we spend the opening period of each meeting in prayer, invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit and listening to, and reflecting upon, a gospel reading and related homily.

This past year saw no changes at all to the Parish Pastoral Council personnel and the membership remains:

Very Reverend Paul Armstrong P.P. and President of the Council	
Joe McGinnity, Chairman	Una Lynch
Michael Goodall, Vice-Chairman	Gerry Steele
Michael Doherty, Secretary	Eamon Foster
Marie McIvor	Marie Moriarty

### **Council Development:**

We began the year in September by bringing to a conclusion the project, commenced the previous session, of developing our knowledge of the theological basis, status and responsibilities of a parish pastoral council. The primary aim of this focus remains the renewal and enhancement of our council's work of strengthening the support that members can provide towards the faith development of our parishioners.

The text *'Living Communion, Vision and Practice for Parish Pastoral Councils in Ireland Today'* produced by the Council for Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith Development (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference) and published by Veritas, was again our guide for this study. Having discussed and assimilated the ideas on discernment emanating from the final chapters in this publication, we feel that our council members

now have a shared understanding of our overall purpose as a PPC and our approach to seeking consensus in discussions.

### **Mission Statement and Constitution:**

A further aim for this year was to review our mission statement and constitution in the light of knowledge gained from the study document mentioned above. We are happy to confirm that both policies were considered early in the year. Some amendments were suggested, agreed and adopted. Our mission statement reads as follows:

*We, the Pastoral Council of St. Bernadette's Parish, inspired by the love of Jesus, will try to develop a vibrant and inclusive spiritual community which welcomes the active participation of everyone in the faith life of the parish.*

The revised constitution for the Parish Pastoral Council is a lengthier document and is available from any of the council members.

### **'Faith and Life':**

As in previous years, a number of members attended this Diocesan Convention in Our Lady and St. Patrick's College in September.

Former Liberal Democrat MP, Sarah Teather, was the keynote speaker and she described in vivid detail her current role, in the Jesuit Refugee Service in London, assisting asylum seekers both in the UK and other countries. Attendees were also provided with a most interesting and informative update on the progress being made by the Syrian refugees recently settled in Northern Ireland, particularly those refugees of school age.

### **Year of Mercy:**

The Extraordinary Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis came to a close in November last. In October, before the Holy Door was shut in Clonard Monastery, the PPC organised a Parish Pilgrimage there. An encouraging number of parishioners attended and, in passing through the Holy Door, symbolically joined with pilgrims world-wide in entering into the presence of God through Christ to seek forgiveness. It was a very moving and memorable ceremony.

### **Faith Development:**

The annual 'big event' was once again our Lenten Faith Development programme held in St. Bernard's Primary School on the Tuesday evenings leading up to Holy Week. This year the programme selected was '**A Biblical Walk Through the Mass**', a DVD series presented by Dr. Edward Sri. Thirty-five, very committed, parishioners signed up for the programme and attendance over the 5 weeks was extremely high. It proved to be a successful programme which contributed greatly to our increased understanding of the mass liturgy and its scriptural roots. The programme concluded on the sixth week with a special focus at the Tuesday evening mass. The PPC is most appreciative of the very dependable support given by our parishioners for this yearly venture.

### **Prayer Calendar:**

In preparation for Lent this year, the PPC prepared and distributed a **Prayer Calendar** within which each day of the season was given a particular focus for individual and family

prayer. This innovation was very well received and appreciated. The PPC is grateful to Mrs. Sinead Farry for her expertise in the final design layout of the calendar.

**Church Anniversary:**

Parishioners will be aware that 2017 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of St. Bernadette's Church. The PPC is extremely supportive of the various celebrations planned to mark this great anniversary and will continue to give assistance, individually and collectively, with the organising arrangements where possible.

**Communicating with Parishioners:** We continue to include a very brief note of the main focus of our discussions each month in the parish weekly bulletin.

**Conclusion:** This is a very brief report on the work of our PPC during the last year. If any parishioner would like more information about our aims and objectives, or would like to make suggestions regarding our future work, please accept our warmest invitation to approach a member of the council.