



Cathedral Parish of Newry, Parish Pastoral Council

Annual Report 2015-2016

1. Executive Summary

Newry Parish Pastoral Council has completed its fifth year of ministry since its formation in June 2011. The 2015/16 year was the second year of the second three year term.

The meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council continued to be held on the second Tuesday of every month from September to June. A number of sub-groups have been in place to take forward the detailed working of initiatives agreed at Council level. Some of the initiatives that sub groups worked on during the year were the planning for the St Patrick's Novena, Sacramental Classes and organising the Parish Mission.

There were a number of resignations from the Pastoral Council in-year and we would like to place on record our thanks to those people who served on the Council for a number of years and who are unfortunately unable to continue.

During the year we welcomed a member of the Polish community as a member of the Council.

Micheál Murphy took on the role of secretary following the resignation of Patricia Maguire.

Membership of the Council is as follows:

Canon Francis Brown (President), Michael Burns, Mark Byrne, Fr. Tony Corr, Laura Curtis, Fr. Cesare Decio, Mary Dynan, Teddy Fearon, Fred Hollowood, Fr. Kris Krysztof, Sinead Malone, Fr. Colum Murphy, Damien Nijad, Izabella Checinska Micheál Murphy, Elizabeth Murray, Paul McCormack, John McClelland (Chair), Florence McMahon, Eimear McShane, Louise Shields, Anne Smith.

2. The Work of the Parish Pastoral Council

Year Five 2015-2016

The Parish Pastoral Council worked very closely with the Liturgy Group throughout the year with a number of members serving on both the Parish Pastoral Council and the Liturgy

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Group. Both groups complimented each other and worked in harmony for the greater good of Newry Parish.

Key Events during 2015-2016

This was another busy year for the PPC and many events, organised by the PPC, or under the auspices of the PPC, took place throughout the year including:

Lectio Divina; Bible Study classes; Sacramental Preparation evenings; a spiritual enrichment evening for Ministers of the Word; Night of Mercy held during Lent and organised by the young people of the parish; various celebratory masses including the Irish/Polish Mass, Mass for engaged couples; Corpus Christi procession and Ballyholland Mass Rock where the special preacher was Fr. Brian Fitzpatrick . In addition members of the PPC also attended a conference in Banbridge about the Parish of Tomorrow given by Donal Harrington.

Emmanuel Mission

One of the highlights of the year was our parish being selected to host an exciting MISSION from the 5th to 13th December for the entire community which was headed by Fr Charles Rochas, Director of the Emmanuel School of Mission in Rome and supported by an international team of young people between 18 and 30 years old. They lived and worked full time in our parish for the duration of the Mission and reached out to all who live here. It was an exciting time and our Parish came alive during the Mission and our hope is that the energy from the Mission will be a constant force in this special parish that is ours. A very successful Night of Mercy was held during the Mission and many people attended the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As part of the Mission a “fire walk” was held in the gardens opposite St Catherine’s to raise money for the renovation of St. Mary’s.

St. Pio Triduum

Triduum in honour of St. Pio held at Mass Rock and organised by the Knights of St Columbanus and Ballyholland I.N.F.

Parish Groups Thanksgiving Mass

The PPC again organised a Thanksgiving Mass for the 72 voluntary groups that work diligently within the parish. At the beginning of Mass each group had a representative who brought forward a lit candle to be placed at the altar providing a shining light to show the vitality of our parish. The Mass was concelebrated by all the Priests within Parish.

Lenten Time

The PPC created an information leaflet for all parishioners on the liturgical events happening within Lent and Holy Week. This pamphlet was available within all churches and on the parish website.

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St Patrick's Novena

Following the success of the St Patrick's Novena in previous years, this year's Novena was equally successful. It has now become an integral part of the Lenten Journey within our Parish. We prayed that we can hold on to the faith that has been handed down to us. We had a different inspirational speaker for the nine nights. The full presentations from all the speakers can be viewed on our parish website <https://vimeo.com/newrycathedral/videos>.

We continued with the special Novena prayer to St Patrick each day; there was also the opportunity to light candles around the statue of St Patrick. There were many prayers of thanksgiving and petitions. As with previous years there were a number of themes which continued to appear through the petitions during the Novena; financial worries, family problems, unemployment, illness, mental illness, addiction; we will continue to keep these people in our prayers.

St. Peregrine Triduum

The Triduum in Honour of St. Peregrine took place in St Brigid's Church on Monday 2nd May – Wednesday 4th May 2016. There was a high volume of petitions received on-line. Overall there were 29,000 views from all over Ireland. 1400 people shared on Facebook. The Novena to St. Peregrine continues in St. Brigid's Church every Friday evening at 7pm where the First Class Relic of St. Peregrine (Patron Saint of people with Cancer) is present for anyone who wishes to be blessed with it.

Funeral Ministry Team

This Team was established to visit the homes of the deceased and say the prayers before the remains are taken to the church.

Passover Meal

The fourth Passover meal (Seder) to celebrate the most significant event in our Liturgical Calendar took place on Spy Wednesday. This 'Passover Seder in the Light of Christ' respects the origin and traditional importance of the Seder to the Jewish faith.

Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

The Icon visited the Cathedral on 10th and 11 May 2016 and large crowds of people came to pray before the icon and to participate in the prayer services organised by the visiting Redemptorist priests.

Baptism Team

The work of the Team continues under a loyal group of people and they continue to participate in the baptisms that take place in St. Brigids.

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Easter Triduum

This year a special emphasis was put on the preparation for the Easter Triduum and various “training” sessions were held in the week leading up to Holy Thursday and this proved to be very successful in ensuring that those taking part in the various services knew their tasks resulting in the smooth running of the service. It is intended that similar preparations will continue next year.

Schools

Our parish was blessed during the year with the opening of two new primary schools, St. Joseph’s Convent Primary and St. Clare’s Abbey Primary. We wish all those involved in the schools every blessing.

Holy Door

The Holy Door was opened by Bishop McAreevey on 13th December 2015 which was the second Sunday of Advent and also known as Gaudete Sunday. The opening of the Door symbolises our opening to the fullness of God’s love and invites us to pass through as a sign that we wish to experience God’s mercy and take others to it.

Other Events

The PPC also had an input to the following;

St. Mary’s Renovation, Blessing of the Graves at St. Mary’s and Monk’s Hill, Family Ramble organised by the youth in the parish, a very successful Divine Mercy week of prayer, Pioneer Mass and presentation of pins, the Mercy Trail in the Cathedral, attendance at the Service in memory of those buried during the famine and representation at the official opening of the Newry Maritime Park.

During the year a leaflet was prepared by Fred Hollowood outlining what was happening in the parish and what events were planned for the future. The other Churches were invited to subscribe. The leaflet was distributed to approximately 3000 homes.

3. Conclusion

As noted in the previous four reports “The Parish Pastoral Council continues to recognise and appreciate the collaboration, support and personal commitment given by so many people and Parish Groups. It is through this team working that we make a difference and keep Newry Parish alive”. This belief is very much alive and the PPC recognises and appreciates the commitment and hard work that continues to be evident from so many in our community.

The PPC have continued to improve and seek out new ways to communicate not only to people living in Newry but also to the housebound and those who have moved away from Newry, via the Internet. The On-Line Media Team has responsibility for the parish website, a range of social media accounts and the webcams in the Cathedral and St. Brigid’s. The webcams provide 24-hour coverage, 365 days per year. An additional webcam will come

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online as soon as St. Mary's Church opens in the autumn 2016. The Team launched a new version of the parish website in January of this year. The Facebook community, www.fb.com/newrycathedral, launched in autumn 2014, continues to grow, reaching 1500+ members by July 2016. The Team also provided photographic coverage of church events throughout the year. An extensive gallery of photographs is now available at www.flickr.com/newrycathedral/ The parish website is kindly sponsored by www.rycomarketing.co.uk

The Parish Newsletter had been an excellent record of life in our parish and is a rich source of information for generations to come. There were some technical problems with the Webcam during the year and work was undertaken to remedy these problems.

The focus for the year ahead will be planning the events that have now become a regular celebration within our parish such as the Parish Groups Thanksgiving Mass, the Annual Mass for those from our parish who died during the past year, St Patrick's Novena, and Information Pamphlets on Lenten and Holy Week ceremonies. The Baptism Team are making preparation for a Mass to be celebrated again this year for all babies (with their families) who were baptised during the last year. The PPC is also looking forward to the establishment of the Children's Adoration Group that will hopefully get under way before December 2016.

The PPC wishes to acknowledge the work undertaken by the many parish groups.

The Parish Centre continues to be extremely busy and the PPC wishes to place on record their thanks for the tremendous work undertaken by the staff at the Centre and also to the role played by Veritas in promoting the faith.

“ Instead of being just a Church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, try also to be a Church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside of itself and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent” *Pope Francis*

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