

**HEARTSTONE: The Paired Parish of  
SACRED HEART and St JOHN STONE  
in the Archdiocese of Liverpool**



**PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT  
in preparation for the  
PARISH OPEN FORUM: THURSDAY 27<sup>th</sup> JULY 2017**

**Since the last Open Forum** in May, **life in the world** has continued with a massive dose of agony: terrorist wars abroad from the evils of ISIS, spawning groups closer to home with atrocities in Manchester and London; dreadful inferno at Grenfell Tower exposing poverty hidden under cladding. Changes politically have rarely been so dramatic: snap General Election, while the Queen continues steadily to 91 and allies over the ocean tweet away! All the while **Pope Francis** holds the world's attention as the voice of the Merciful God, the call to peace and generosity for the poor, and the hand of creative teaching with "Amoris Laetitia" and "Laudato Si". Even he is struggling to update the antiquities of the Vatican in his efforts to reform and improve our Church's service of God's Kingdom in the world.

**In parish life** we joined the Southport pilgrimage to Walsingham in June with a lot of love. The Ainsdale Show ecumenical service was led by our parish this year and, celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Local Covenant of Churches Together in Ainsdale, was joyful and a real blessing to the whole community.

The PP's crooked back came and went, and Slimming World's service rose in status! Some terribly sad losses among beloved members of the community reminded us again of the average age of HeartStone people, but also the wonderfully vibrant and strong loving faith and mutual support.

**In the Archdiocese**, the celebration of the Golden Anniversary of the Cathedral came and went without much ado outside the locality I suspect, sadly for such a fabulous church. Archbishop Malcolm was busy with many priests changing parishes and roles, all Deans gathered for renewed effort at priests working together and being supported, and the request for all in local areas to advise him on how best to look upon our future mission.

**THE ARCHBISHOP'S REQUEST**

**Thank You** to all who took part at the last Forum and in other ways, looking to the future as Archbishop Malcolm asked us to: "how best to use the resources we have for the mission of the Church in [our] area. He has stressed the principles of:

- called to community in the Church, communities within a bigger parish?
- celebrating Sunday well, to make daily lives holy
- deepening the partnership between clergy and laity
- keep our focus on our mission to go out and share our faith, through witness and generous service of others

**This has convinced me of the value of our Vision and Priorities, especially in:  
DEVELOPMENT OF ADULTS IN FAITH AND MINISTRY:**

- better resourcing, training and sustaining our volunteers in the mission and service
- extending what lay ministers do and appreciating their gifts and charisms

**Faith4Life:** Five of us have been through this excellent Archdiocesan course for learning and spiritual strength to combine faith with our everyday lives. A new course **begins September 30<sup>th</sup> and is being hosted in Sacred Heart Hall**. A marvellously helpful opportunity giving lots of confidence for people in faith and ministry, and a blessing for all Catholics in all the West Coast Parishes

- **Our Lady's Guild** is a fine example of how a parish can build faithful Catholics with strong friendships: how can we expand such a blessing?

**YOUNG PEOPLE:**

This is the chosen focus of the Pastoral Area reps for Southport Catholic Churches. When we regroup in late October we can hope for new ideas:

- confirmation preparation for 14 year olds when it returns in 2020
- the new "Faith In Action" process of helping young people value the service they give in church and society
- links of Christ the King High School to the parishes
- a youth worker through the Ecumenical partnership, or a Catholic paid youth worker for the Pastoral Area
- finding out about the SVP ways of helping youth grow in faith and service
- the Pope has a Synod in 2018 about Vocation and Young People: a questionnaire is active now in preparation

**THE WEST COAST:**

There is no reason why Catholics shouldn't join together more to sustain each other as fresh ways of faith flourish among us in these dramatically changing times. So let us continue to find ways to share opportunities for formation, learning, prayer and service and build up unity among us as Catholics on the West Coast of the Archdiocese. After all, we live in Liverpool's California! Be creative

**THE PARISH VISION TEAM**

After this First year of Serving with the Parish Priest we are changing.

**Clare McConnell** has stepped down with our massive gratitude, after sturdy work pioneering our learning about growing strategies for our mission priorities.

**Gina Steed and Anne O'Callaghan** continue for a second year.

**Monica Gannon** continues as ex officio, being parish administrator.

**Anne Pickup** is to join the team now: a Sacred Heart parishioner and accomplished RE teacher.

**John Sullivan** is also to join the team, delighted to have newly found the strength of faith in St John Stone's Parish.

**Brian Cooney** is our 7<sup>th</sup> member: a 5 O'clocker lecturer at Edge Hill.

**Veronica Murphy** from the Archdiocesan Formation Dept will continue to facilitate us, and very blessed to have her skills and insights we are.

**I am looking forward very much** to sharing the oversight of the parish mission with this Team as we develop further the Vision you all created in the Listening and Meetings from January 2015.

**We begin work Together** with an induction time on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August at 3pm, but it is great you will have a chance to meet them at the Forum.

**THE LISTENING PROCESS:** Gina has invited people again to have private conversations about how things are going in parish life, and she will give us a feed back and chance to share the results at the Forum. This enables me and the Team to be truly a Listening Leadership and able to be Responsive to life emerging.

**OUR CHURCH TEAMS:** I have learnt much better how to make good use of our teams, and St John Stone's team has new members to bring it up to strength. The monthly meetings are the best place for various parish business to be shared by others. At the recent **Joint Meeting** a very good discussion took place about **MARRIAGE IN CHURCH LIFE TODAY** :what is the attitude of our Church now to people in second marriages. Can they come to Communion? Have things changed? If so how come? If not, how do things actually stand? We will put this **on the agenda** for all parishioners to receive an update on our Church's mind-set about marriage and discuss together: How do we follow the lead of **"Amoris Laetitia"**, the fruit of the two Universal Synods of Marriage and Family Life, to send out a strong message to people who don't fit the perfect image of family and sexual relationships in Church teaching up until now: **that the Merciful Love of God is urging us to welcome and share dialogue with anyone who wants to participate in the life of our church.**

#### ST JOHN STONE'S PARISH CENTRE

**"The Club"** in SJS is an integral part of parish life as we know it and enormously valuable for our church and the local community. It is managed as part of the Archdiocesan scheme as the best way to ensure it's continuity, financial health and best professional practice.

Fr Tony has agreed with the Archdiocese's decision that **the Club will close on Sunday and Monday nights** starting on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July. Lack of customers on those nights mean we are losing money, and saving costs like this will add to other efforts we are making to subsidise the running of the club to ensure we sustain it as a going concern far into the future. This is sad in light of how things used to be, so do support the club more to keep it developing now.

**Bookings** are still possible on Sunday and Monday nights with the usual terms: did you know it can be free hire?

**The Deficit** is coming down well. The committee have the next 2 socials ring fenced for club funds, and the **Barrelage Discount** will clear the deficit in 10 months or so. Trading in the Archdiocesan scheme means we get a discount price, and that discount figure each month usually goes into parish funds to help the Church's mission. We are in debt in the club, so the discount is used to pay that off until we get into the black. The good news is that the £10,000 we have accumulated from discount will now be used to offset part of the interest free loan we have from the Archdiocese, and the barrelage discount from now on should clear the rest in about 10 months.

**WELL DONE THE TEAM! Do support the Functions on :**

- **28<sup>th</sup> July: Motown Night**
- **25<sup>th</sup> August : Summer Ball with a Michael Bubl  Tribute**
- **22<sup>nd</sup> September: act to be announced**

#### CHRISTIAN UNITY

2017 is the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation on October 31<sup>st</sup>

- let us research our British Bishops' Ecumenism and revisit "One Bread One Body"
- we dream of closer communion with all Christians and hope to serve this dream on the Feast of All Saints, Nov 1<sup>st</sup>

#### INTER – FAITH

With Islam so much in the news, though mostly corrupted, abusive forms of the true faith, the Catholic call to honour all who seek God by other paths can include, in HeartStone, a session in September to mark the beautiful Assisi gatherings.

#### LOOKING AHEAD:

**August Holiday Times:** with "fewer priests and fewer Catholics" summer mass times must change for two weeks only while I am on holiday: **Sundays 6<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> only, masses will be on Saturday 5.30pm in SH and Sunday 10.30am in SJS**

**Come September: The Living Christ Retreat** is a vital opportunity

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>: Home Mission Sunday** launches "Come and See" and "With You Always". **Fr Mark Moran** begins in Holy Family.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>: 2-5pm in St Patrick's.** Catechists and parents from the Pastoral Area: **"Children Learning to Pray"**

**Autumn dates: Sunday October 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Joint Mass in St John Stone

**The Widow/ers Might:** spiritual maturity among us  
Archbishop Malcolm and the Deans feed back on his request

**2018: Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool; The Roman Synod on the Young**

**2019: 3 year review-time of the Come and See – from Pentecost 2016**

**2020: 4 year revisiting of the Parish Vision -- from Pentecost 2016**

**2021: the parish priest hits 70!**

#### Parish Vision Statement

*Jesus Christ is uniting our community of HeartStone in its Vision and Mission so that all might find a place of welcome, prayer and loving outreach when in need.*

## **Prayer for Mission in our Time and Place**

God of the Universe,  
we give you thanks for all that we share,  
for the faith and the community that sustains us.

God of our lives, you are challenging us  
to follow you into the future,  
inviting us to new ventures, new challenges,  
new ways to care, new ways to touch the hearts of all.  
When we are fearful of the unknown, give us courage.

When we worry that we are not up to the task,  
remind us that you would not call us if you did not believe in us.  
When we get tired or disappointed with the way things are going,  
remind us that you can bring change and hope  
out of the most difficult situations.

Bless to us, O Lord the doors we open,  
the thresholds we cross,  
the roads that lie before us.  
Go with us as we go, sharing the journey!