

**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: WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

**Since the last Open Forum in July, life in the world.....**

**Brexit** dominates the news media in Britain, but will not here!

Surely the **Refugees** and Asylum Seekers continue but we don't hear of them on the usual media now.....Pope Francis calls them **migrants** not immigrants so much, stressing the fact they are mostly driven from their homes and normal lives by wars, terror, persecution or the dark side of capitalism and climate change effects.

The recent horror in Manhattan is but the latest of **terrorist acts**, also in Britain and Europe. Meanwhile hope may be tentatively placed in a new regime in **Saudi Arabia** that wants to have a more moderate Islam than the Wahabi type, allow respect of other religions and now lets women drive! Aid to the Church in Need is doing great work still, helping **resettlement of Christians** and others in Iraq and the plains of Nineveh, now that more of the war in Syria is decided against ISIS.

**Reformation and renewal in Politics** and Westminster may have some progress with the protests come to light of sexual harassment and cover up, but please God we can still hope for reform of the Banking and Housing side of life in Britain.

**In parish life**

The **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St John Stone's Parish** came at a wonderful time to celebrate fruitfulness in the Parish Vision and **Golden Weddings** seem to be occurring last year and this and next as well! The **25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Local Covenant** of Churches Together in Ainsdale was celebrated on All Saints Day as we also gave thanks for Ecumenical Progress from Vatican 2's initiatives, marking the positive side of life now on the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation. The TV programme "Gunpowder" seems to have been the first many English viewers have heard about Catholic persecution in Britain in the past!

**In the Archdiocese.**

**Catholic Reformation** is a continuous part of our Church's life, not least in the Universal Call to Holiness which demands constant, ongoing conversion. Following on from his earlier letter asking advice, the Archbishop has announced **SYNOD 2020** and 3years preparing for it, so the whole of the Archdiocese can decide how we must adjust to what God asks of us, changing for the future. **2018 is to be a year of Prayer** for this end, and links to the **National Eucharistic Congress** next September. Please God we can keep in mind the principles outlined in the earlier letter from the Archbishop:

called to community in Church, communities within a bigger parish community?

celebrating Sunday well, to make daily lives holy

deepening the partnership between clergy and laity

keep focus as "missionary disciples": sharing faith, through witness and generous service of others

**SHARING TOGETHER IN MINISTRY**

This is crucial for fresh ways for faith to flourish, and one of the Priorities people called for at the start of the Parish Vision. **Gina Steed** is the Vision Team member who has done most to help us keep conscious in these customs. She also helps the Archdiocesan team give the support and formation for sharing in ministry through the wonderful **Faith4Life Course**. Fr Tony, Gina, Debbie Gerrard and Anne Pickup did this last year, and this year Irene Walker and Anne O'Callaghan have signed up. Any other takers? The first weekend session is January 13<sup>th</sup> /14<sup>th</sup> .They have also completed the two evenings of the **Being A Catechist Course**. Debbie Gerrard, being a daring type, has signed up for the new **Diploma in Pastoral Ministry and Leadership** run by the Archdiocese in partnership with Chicago University. That also begins in January....do ask for more information.

## **Our Volunteers in Shared Ministry and Service**

**Thank God** for so many talented and committed servants that make parish life possible and fruitful. The **new look ministry support sessions** were a big help to me last week, and I hope we can keep developing ways of growing in support, improvements and good decisions together for modern ministry.

**BAPTISMS:** we do not have enough help to maintain the policies of last year so we will try to have a home visit **or** preparation meeting for each family asking for Christening. If we get more volunteers we can do more, maybe a follow up contact after the Baptism.

**COME and SEE:** our 4 catechists are great; only 1 enquirer this year, St Marie's doing well with 10+, hoping Fr Mark Moran will link up together with some new enquiries. Next year we will have a review/research event for the West Coast outreach. We hope to invite interest through schools' bulletins.

**SAFEGUARDING:** Gina, Anne Major and Anne Pickup in SH continue to battle on. We will introduce a designated safeguarding email, and we want to attract more

**ACCOMPANIERS** in the Children's Liturgy, and Eucharistic Ministry to the homes. **Safe Home** systems should be in place for ministers and the priest.

**CHILDREN'S LITURGY:** we have great catechists but few of them, rarely do they have a Sunday off and we have few children coming to our masses. **Half Term Sundays** there will not be children's liturgy in future to ease the load.

**MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST:** 5 of our team can now lead Liturgy of the Word and Communion: they need to do it regularly to keep fresh, and we hope to print our parish booklet. **Coeliacs** need to know the policy that the priest will have the **gluten free hosts** wherever he is giving out hosts at mass **Prayer for Blessings** for people with crossed arms, including children, not receiving communion, can be given by all ministers. Please respect the ministry of all lay ministers when coming for communion. Sorry for any confusions in the past with this policy.

*Ministers please ensure to tell the apparitor of the mass that you have arrived for ministry. Rotas are going well, each minister to get own cover if not able to attend, emailing is helping many do this.*

**MINISTERS OF THE WORD/READERS:** Everyone knows to take off top coats, carrying in the lectionary is valued. Reverence for the Word means please do not bow to the tabernacle or anything else on the sanctuary but leave at the end of reading, off the sanctuary to your place. If you really need to, it is okay to turn and bow when off the sanctuary. It is the Reader's responsibility to invite the congregation to "**stand to acclaim/welcome the gospel**" We said last time, please keep it up, that readers could **give each other feedback: volume, pace, clarity**

**LIVING CHRIST RETREAT TEAM:** having enjoyed 2 retreats now the 3<sup>rd</sup> is Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> for people involved in Education. Our team now includes people from other parishes on the West Coast, meeting regularly for prayer and preparation.

**MUSIC MINISTRY:** it is time for a renewed push at developing the unity and leadership of music in church, and for increasing and updating participation by the people. HOW is a problem....advertise and pay for a director? Volunteers? Music for Young People was a dream voiced.....repeat new hymns over weeks to learn... ..recruit members for SJS choir...could we start with carols this year?

**FLOWERS/CLEANING/GROUNDS and GARDENING/SACRISTANS/ HOSPITALITY/ADMIN for accounts and counters/BINGO** and other services seem to be going well or at least ok....many could do with recruits. **Any issues do see the priest or Monica in the office** as was requested before the Ministries Meetings day.

## **CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR MINISTRY**

- a learning session on Lectionary Year B, Luke's Gospel from Irenaeus
- probably best as part of Advent, hopefully with other parishes
- a spiritual/retreat day for ministers at some time after Easter

### ***GOOD IDEAS emerging from the discussions:***

- say the mass intention at start of mass, just before the opening prayer
- welcome the reader by name so people get to know each other more
- continue talks for "Education" section of life as today's Catholics
- find what helps for ongoing Catechesis for parishioners

**WELLBEING:** Learning and skills continue to grow through our team gatherings, in tune with the Archdiocese outlooks on Dementia, disabilities, training for clergy and ministers. A **course for personal learning and growth** will be offered soon.

**ECUMENISM:** as well as the usual shared activities, we are blessed to shared service with the other churches in the **Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure** centre at the Methodists, a commitment from the Ecumenical Covenant, and parishioners volunteer there. The **Foodbank** is ecumenical also, on Thursday afternoons. St John's C of E are starting a **Youth Gathering on Wednesday Evenings** which we also hope will help some appreciate faith and church.

**THANK YOU** to people who have stepped down recently from ministry:

Peter Byrne from Eucharistic Ministry, Kay Slater from Ecumenism Rep, Sheila Yates from Children's Liturgy, Jack and Lucy from serving.

Rachel Flynn from Baptism team.

Bill Grant, RIP, is a big loss in the sacristy/liturgy at SJS.

### **RECRUITS ARE NEEDED:**

Altar Servers in SJS.....help with SACRISTY some times also

Greeters at SJS masses....and a further refresher training session for apparitors

Welcomers for parents asking for Baptism: starting with hello at mass.

Accompaniers for Children's Liturgy and Eucharistic Minsters going to homes Funeral Ministers to lead

funerals: the next course for training is Feb 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018 at LACE

**FINAL COMMENTS from Fr Tony:** I realise now that the summer changes to Mass times seemed to have been accepted very well, and so maybe we should plan similar next year, subject to any possible communication and arrangements with neighbouring parishes.

Plans to extend the Foodbank from Ainsdale to a Woodvale distribution point are progressing as we go to print, and we await the Deans meeting with the Archbishop on 21<sup>st</sup> November, to learn more about how the Southport Pastoral Area may progress in serving our Catholic mission, and what future shape will emerge for the Southport Catholic Coordinating Group.

### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

**2018: Year of Prayer for Year#1 of preparation for SYNOD 2020**

**September: 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**

**Summer SYNOD 2020 in the Archdiocese**

**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.*