



HeartStone: the paired Parish of Sacred Heart & St John Stone

Seeking fresh Vision and new Energy



PARISH OPEN FORUM Tuesday 26th January 2021 by Zoom

This in the **Parish Priest's Briefing** in preparation for the zeeting, to update parishioners on current developments, pressing issues and decisions needing consultation with the community of faith.

I offer this briefing within the general context of this year being –

- the 3rd decade of the 3rd millennium since Christ was born human on the earth
- seeing the Covid Era as the Next Chapter in the History of Christianity on Planet Earth.
- already we have been called to bear suffering of the pandemic for 11 months, and now England is into lockdown #3: much must change and has, how will be decided for a future
- there are large resonances in a global perspective, national one for Britain, and for our parish and within the already known crises from before Covid woke up so much of our world

Resurrection not merely a Resuscitation

This attitude I first voiced emerging from the first lock down. We do the crisis of Covid in a way that will make us worse or better as Catholics, we cannot be the same or go back to how it was. Here in Ainsdale and Woodvale our efforts towards renewal began before Covid, we have suspended our old parish vision statement since April and, using the Synoding to help us locally, are a step closer now to a new Parish Vision and priorities of Mission for HeartStone's commitment.

危机

A time of danger; A time of opportunity; This is a good way to reflect the Covid era.

WEIJI is the Chinese word for CRISIS (pronounced WAY-GEE)
The Chinese lettering for Weiji comprises both the character for "Danger" and for "Opportunity".

This reflection has all been within the setting of the Archdiocesan efforts of renewal with Synod 2020. The changes needed are not new; since Vatican 2 and Liverpool 1980 the Spirit has been calling the Church.

Now we are listening: **SYNODING = Becoming the Church God is calling us to be.**

Through parish listening, Vision Team discussions, Synod Members collaboration and the proposals newly published by the diocese, I have selected from Synoding so far what seems most relevant for HeartStone:

"Lay people should not be regarded as 'collaborators' of the clergy, but rather as people who are really 'co-responsible' for the Church's being and acting... It is therefore important that a mature and committed laity be consolidated, which can make its own specific contribution to the ecclesial mission with respect for the ministries and tasks that each one has in the life of the Church"

Archbishop Malcolm quoting Saint Pope Benedict 16th

A. Theme #3 HOW WE PRAY TOGETHER - Synod affirms and proposes that:

- ❖ good liturgical formation and learning be developed for all the People of God, including priests and more use of lay ministers in the liturgy
- ❖ we all value the importance of spiritual formation and accompaniment at each stage of the faith journey
- ❖ "that parishes collaborate with each other as no one parish can meet every need".
- ❖ we increase "the place of schools in the prayer life of the parish community."

OUR PARISH PRAYER: I ask that for now we use the Magnificat of Mary as a prayer for the parish mission:

**My soul glorifies the Lord My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour
He looks on his servant in my lowliness; henceforth all ages will call me Blessed.
The Almighty works marvels for me, Holy his name.
His mercy is from age to age on those who revere him.**

**God puts forth His arm in strength and scatters the proud- hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones and raises the lowly.
God fills the starving with good things, sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel his servant, remembering His mercy,
the mercy promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and his offspring for ever.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen**

Praying for HeartStone: Anne O'Callaghan has committed herself to a ministry of praying for her/our community. With regular time and prayers, she is willing to include and share with others who would join this new venture. A big thank you to Anne, and if you would like to join in, or find out more about this beautiful ministry, do let us know in the parish office and we will pass on your name.

*O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us.
May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings.
Help us to become a community that vulnerably shares
each other's burdens and the weight of glory.
Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. (...own intentions.....)
Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking,
we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God. Amen*

THE IRENAEUS PROJECT: I have donated substantially to Irenaeus for their expansion at Waterloo with additional premises, and we will continue and increase our alliance with Fr Chris and Sr Moira in their service on our West Coast of the Archdiocese.

VIRTUAL CHURCH: the extension of the internet, camera and projector, recording and broadcasting liturgy from St John Stone Church will enable us in HeartStone to involve and include more people, during confinements from Covid or any other health reasons in the course of life. So far zoom is offered by the generous time and skills of one person..... Can YOU help?!

HOME IS A HOLY PLACE: The Covid Era has massively shown the importance of family, and home life – from grandparents home-schooling to enable parents to work, even from home, to the only place you can get help to cope – and faith life must recognize this. Our efforts at Home/School/ Parish address this and also the call to value so much more the vital **Vocation of Parents**.

B. Theme#4 BUILDING COMMUNITY and NURTURING BELONGING

Synod proposes that:

- ❖ **opportunities to belong to supportive and formative small groups, such as family groups and sodalities, be developed so that they become essential building blocks of parishes**
This is a central pillar of survival in the faith in future, and technology has enabled many of you to form your own groupings during lockdown, and long may virtual groupings continue. Help with servant-leadership will be needed, for this vision is one of a communion of small communities.
- ❖ **GROUPINGS will be offered** following the Living Christ Breakfast on Saturday 16th January for the growing and encouraging each other in the faith. Synod proposes in Sharing the Mission of Jesus 2:28 **that in each pastoral area there be opportunities available to belong to small groups for formation, prayer, socialising and action**
- ❖ **NEIGHBOURING:** is it possible for HeartStone to serve the wider community in forming friendship groupings, eg linking with the Community Association, ecumenical partners? WACA has groups around their activities, and **Improve Woodvale** might well give us opportunities.
- ❖ **SOCIALISING: St John Stone's Social Club** and the parish hall will continue to be a great service to building community, in the parish and locally. Similarly with **Sacred Heart Hall** and the many ways the team serve the local community and organisations.
- ❖ **there must be more collaboration and interaction to strengthen the home/school/parish partnership by using innovative ways of sharing faith, sharing gifts and resources and enabling joint projects**
 - **HOME/SCHOOL/PARISH:** It is clear that we are asked to set a lead in this vital way of the future, in the absence of a primary school and the difficulties of other parishes getting involved. John Sullivan, Anne Pickup, Eleanor Lalley and I have formed a team and are actively researching ways to develop this mission. Synoding also proposes action for “...chaplaincy...links between school and parish...appropriately ...what it means to be a Catholic school...”(Theme#1 – 1:30f)

- **YOUTH:** the service to school is closely linked to the call I discern for us to take a lead now in the support of Young People in Southport. Who will offer to help the young into faith, fulfilment and happiness in the Covid chapter of life on Planet Earth? We are already in alliance ecumenically with the Southport Area Schools Worker Trust, our Catholic Animate, and CTiA.
- ❖ **The HeartStone Census** will be a service to this aspect of faith life, equipping us for better communication and keeping in touch. Please complete and return a Census form.
- ❖ **Care Calling** to the lonely and those wanting contact, and **listening** for those in grief, contributes to our community love, but more need to offered time to help.

C. Theme #1 ALL CALLED AND GIFTED

Synod proposes that:

- ❖ **the Archdiocese commits to the promotion of the vocation of all the baptised and a culture of discernment of specific callings within that (1:22)**
- ❖ In particular the Synod proposes (1;11): **that the giftedness of all the faithful is recognised, valued, nurtured, and given opportunity to flourish within governance structures, formation initiatives, and leadership roles** and also (1:16) **increased resources be allocated to young adult ministry and pastoral formation for those in the 18-30 age group**

These aspects of the voice of Catholic people in our time is a fine testimony to the need for us to make more of the call to faith, becoming more Christian not just having been Christened and the opportunities for us to grow in **Becoming Covid Christians** must expand:

- ❖ **ADULT FORMATION** in the Gospel, living the Faith, ways of Lay Ministry, Prayer and leading Prayer in various approaches and styles. Various aspects of adult formation can be included. Now is the time to voice needs and wishes, to the Vision Team so that lifelong learning is a reality among us.
- ❖ Education for leadership in various roles, including the Young People – is this wanted? For instance, friendly help with the faith-sharing groups to get them going?
- ❖ **THE PARISH VISION TEAM** is now being renewed and a leaflet explaining what we do, and why, is available and offers are being received before the Forum. The Team operate as part of the whole community **Listening to Each Other**, with various ways including Suggestion boxes and emails, the Church Teams, the Parish Vision Team, the parish staff with the Priest.

“Leadership is about creating, day by day, a domain in which we are able to participate in shaping the future. This is the deepest territory of leadership – collectively ‘listening’ to what is wanting to emerge in the world, and then having the courage to do what is required.” Joseph Jaworski: Synchronicity

- **GIVING OF SERVICE: “TIME, TALENT, TREASURE”**

Parish life more and more depends on how much volunteering occurs. Churches close of stay open, parishes amalgamate of survive not depending on priests but on parishioners and the use of their time, talents and treasure. Maybe this way **perhaps this time** the Archdiocese will **have to** make effective all the words about collaboration between parishes, deaneries etc etc!

Meanwhile HeartStone needs offers of service in:

- IT: to run the zoom at Sunday masses, and extend what we can do if we have volunteers
- Music at Mass: to use the Bluetooth, ipod, CDs for liturgy
- Stewards: we could do with more, especially during the weekdays - please consider the rota - and training is given with a great spirit of team support
- Readers at mass are starting to return, as are Communion Ministers to people’s homes (outside only) so I want to enact Fr Kieran’s idea of **Mass Teams** for the different times, for ideas and developing actions and spirituality
- **SAFEGUARDING:** Synod proposes that this is a standing agenda item at every parish council meeting and that the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Team lead on informing key thematic issues to be considered during the year

D. Theme #2 SHARING THE MISSION OF JESUS

This can sound unnecessarily daunting so we want to encourage the continued growth of “a safe space to talk Jesus”. Outdoor eucharists helped this massively, and we hope to continue. More are sharing in the mission of Jesus than they know, and I tend to approach this theme as:

- **the other themes really provide practical ways for SHARING IN the mission of Christ today, and the gifts he brings to sustain us in that life**
- **and this theme is where we concentrate on SHARING OUT the fruits of that living, within the community of faith yes, but especially in the wider society, reaching out, and in our contacts of ordinary life with all people and those in particular need**

Synod proposes that: the Archdiocese heed the call of Pope Francis to be brave and courageous in renewing structures so that they are at the service of mission rather than self-preservation

- **“ASKing”** is the name of our revised invitation to new people to learn the faith with us, coming from Jesus’ teaching for us “ASK and it will be given to you; SEEK and you will find; KNOCK and it will be given to you”
- **THE LIVING CHRIST MINISTRY** will be revived to lead to the Living Christ Retreat when we can, and we start again with the Living Christ Breakfast on Saturday 16th January, as outlined in the newsletters.

Following on from this an invitation is given to all to receive and share in spiritual support to each other in the

5 Ways of Sustaining our Relationship with Christ:

1. Pray every day
2. Cultivate a Grateful Heart
3. Participate in your Faith Community
4. Have a Care for Social Justice
5. Live in Reality

Groupings can offer help and enjoyment of the faith and friendship, and people can voice what will help from the parish. (see 2:28)

Synod Proposes that: in order to form the faithful for practical action, resources are developed that allow Catholic Social Teaching to be an integral part of formation, catechesis and homilies (2:10)

- **Faith Doing Justice** is how I tend to talk about this in newsletters and often people talk about it more comfortably as CHARITY or helping those in need

❖ **ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION**

Pope Francis calls this the necessary changes in us...and the Synod proposes:

that every school and parish community develop and implement a 5, 10 and 15 year environmental plan based on the principles of Laudato Si.

- ❖ **MODERN SLAVERY** must be on the agenda for Christians as responsible citizens and allied to this:

❖ **IMMIGRATION/REFUGEES**

- ❖ **VIOLENCE** has increased in the world – as well as much kindness – during Covid so far and so we must be alert to the movements for **Peace, Arms Trade, Nuclear deterrent, and Domestic Violence**

- ❖ **HOMELESSNESS and UNEMPLOYMENT** will increase locally very much

PARISH RESOURCES AND THE PARISH YEAR PLAN

- **Synod Proposes that: the Archdiocese develops a new communication and media strategy that enables people to learn, be informed, communicate and evangelise**

This is very much how we were approaching the changes in our staffing with Monica on reduced-hours contract devoted to communicating our invitation to people.

I have still failed to fill in the necessary paperwork to apply to the Archdiocese for a new Part Time Parish Secretary...but this is the plan.

Eleanor is proving her worth, with new ideas and imagination for us all. She begins her 3rd year of the 3-year contract in the Pilot Project as our Pastoral Associate. She will concentrate on Youth with Home/School/ Parish

Money: thank you to so many who have continued to donate to parish income by standing order, cheques or even envelopes through the door. A heartfelt thanks to Anne Coupe who has helped out so generously.

The parish bank balances together in November were £125,000. There is no relevance in the separate statements now because most bills over the last months for both churches have been paid by the SJS account.

This proposal has been public among us for some time now, newsletters and word of mouth, and any observations welcome at the Forum. The Archbishop then needs the notice of the Council of Clergy to enact the change canonically, perhaps in March.

The two parishes of Sacred Heart and St John Stone are in the Ainsdale & Woodvale parts of Southport. The two parishes have been paired, shared clergy and common mission, since Sept 2001 and with an Archdiocesan priest for both since 2015. In these 19 years a sense of belonging and being one community has developed. Most parishioners and the local clergy see the further step of becoming one canonical parish (serving two church communities) as a natural progression. It will also enable substantial simplicity of administration and Archdiocesan office work. It is proposed the united parish be called Sacred Heart and St John Stone, Ainsdale.

Meanwhile, until the name of the bank account is changed formally as specified, please donate as you wish to either

THE AGENDA SO FAR.....

- **2 Parishes into 1.....the new Deanery**
- **Update on New Vision Team**
- **The Year Plan 2021**
- **Parish chosen charities: keep same or proposals for new**
- **.....your suggestions will be considered if received before Thursday 21st January noon**