

REPORT ON PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

MAY 2008 to OCTOBER 2011

The current Parish Pastoral Council was elected in May 2008. I propose to give a brief report on some of the activities which have been carried out since then.

Since our first Pastoral Council was established in 2005, it has been customary in our parish to meet each month throughout the year, with the exception of July and August. However there are also many other meetings of sub-committees during the year when particular projects are in hand.

Child Protection. This is of paramount importance in our parish. We supported the establishment of a Child Protection Policy in here in St. Brigid's to comply with the Diocesan requirements. Mary Kelly and George Maybury are the members of the Child Protection Team. Full details are available on the Parish Website and Church notice boards.

Parish Website. Originally set up in 2006, our parish website was upgraded by in early 2010. It involved a lot of effort and training to achieve an informative and useful site. It provides very good information on the Parish and related activities. It is updated regularly with up - to - minute parish news and has links to other useful websites. www.blanchardstownparish.ie

Liturgy Team. A new Liturgy group was formed a year ago with a view to enhancing the liturgies of the parish and giving people an opportunity to deepen their relationship with God through, prayer, ritual and liturgy. Some of the initiatives we have been involved in:

- On-going up skilling and workshops in liturgy
- Advent: Morning prayer, evening prayer advent liturgy, reflections in the newsletter and website, new Jesse tree, Jesse symbols with the school children, new purple banners.
- Christmas: children's liturgy, congregational singing, use of cantor
- Lent: Lenten wilderness, scripture reflections in the missalette, Wednesday morning prayer
- Palm Sunday: Scripture quotes for all the congregation, crown of thorns symbolism to the cross
- Triduum: Holy Thursday children's liturgy, stations of the cross resources, prayer around the cross, extra participation in the Easter Vigil, congregational singing
- Celebrating the liturgy for St Brigid's Day
- Involvement in the mass for all nations
- Novena of grace singing of hymns
- Special liturgy of renewal and healing for the victims of abuse
- Images of certain saints used in the sacred space over the year
- Commentaries for certain feasts and solemnities
- Decoration of the sacred space
- Resources for the music ministry groups

Hospitality Group. We felt there was a need for a group to provide hospitality at the end of the various parish celebrations and events so a new hospitality group was set up in 2008. They took on this responsibility with great enthusiasm and efficiency and work hand - in hand with the Liturgy Group. It has been a huge benefit to the Parish and enhances all our celebrations. It provides a place for people to gather and continue the celebration, to talk about the event and to meet friends old and new in a friendly atmosphere. The delicious food is very much appreciated!

Mass on Air. In April of this year, following discussions with Phoenix Radio 92.5 FM, the local community radio for Dublin 15, we started broadcasting 10am Mass aimed at those who are housebound or are ill at home or in hospital. We are very grateful for the wholehearted work and co-operation by the staff in Phoenix FM. The feedback has been very positive.

Defibrillator. A group of people in the Parish have now been trained in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and in the use of a defibrillator. We hope to have a defibrillator installed in the Church in the near future.

Lourdes Pilgrimage. A committee was set up to promote a Parish pilgrimage to Lourdes from 5th to the 11th July 2009. About 30 people went on the Pilgrimage. It was a very fulfilling, spiritual and joyful time for all concerned.

Parish Banner. A new parish banner was completed in time for the St Brigid's Day Celebrations in February 2011. We are indebted to the ICA members who volunteered their time and expertise in embroidering and hand stitching the beautiful banner. A special word of thanks to Rose Harris for the design, to Tony Harris for the artwork and to Angela Connell for her help.

Saint Brigid's Day Festival. On Sunday January 30th 2011 we celebrated the feast of St. Brigid, Patron Saint of our Parish. Our new parish banner was carried in procession with the priests, readers and altar servers at the beginning of Mass and again in the recessional procession. Red and white bunting was erected around the Church grounds, St. Brigid's statue was specially lit up for that week. special hymn sheets were distributed and St. Brigid's hymn was sung at all Masses. Our own Choir sang at the 10am Mass and The Phillipino Choir sang at the 12 noon Mass. The entries for schools art competition on the theme of St. Brigid were displayed on the walls of the Church extension. As part of the celebration, on Friday 28th January, all the parish volunteer groups were invited to a wine and finger food social evening with music in the background provided the very talented Doyle family.

It was a way for the Parish to thank all the people who give so much of their time to the Parish in many different ways. The groups represented included the following:

- Ministers of the Eucharist
- Ministers of the Word
- Church Cleaner Teams
- Altar Group- Flowers
- Collectors/Counters both at Mass and Door to Door
- Choirs/Musicians
- Liturgy Team
- "Do this in Memory" Team
- Confirmation Teams
- Baptism Group
- Bereavement Group
- Parish Pastoral Council
- Altar Servers Trainers
- Finance Committee
- Hospitality Group

On Sunday after the 12 noon Mass all the volunteer groups had stands in the Community Hall. It gave them an opportunity to say what they do and hopefully get some new members. They were joined by other organisations who work in the parish including:

- Accord
- Crosscare
- Vincent de Paul
- Legion of Mary
- Scouts/Guides
- Tuesday Prayer Group
- ICA
- Youth 2000 Group
- Active Age Group

Communications Group. A group has been formed to look at communication within our Parish. Its objective is to let all of the people in our parish know what is happening in the parish by the best means possible.

All parish news is now available on the parish Website. The group has produced two newsletters. The 1st newsletter looked at St. Brigid's Parish Festival Weekend, updates from Pelletstown, "Parishes Working Together", the launch of our Radio Mass, pope John Paul 2 Awards, World Youth Day, the Eucharistic Congress and the update from the Liturgy Group.

The second newsletter, issued last week, covered updates on the Eucharistic Congress, the Congress bell arriving in our parish, Festival of Peoples, the new Missal, an update from the ministers of the Eucharist, "Parishes Working Together" and the role of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Banners were erected to publicise St Brigid's Parish Festival Weekend.

A small group are now working the weekly newsletter. A new format will be needed as the launch of the new missal will require a more detailed missalette covering all the new Mass responses.

We also want to get a Church notice board in the Church grounds to publicise the Mass times, Confession times and any contact details required in the parish.

We really need some volunteers to help with this initiative.

Pelletstown. Pelletstown lies within our parish boundary. The first Pastoral Office was set up in there in November 2006 to provide a presence among the community. We have supported the work of the Pastoral workers there with parishioners from St. Brigid's joining in the Annual Christmas Carol Service, going door -to - door making contact with the people living there and giving them information on the services available in Pelletstown and in St. Brigid's.

Parish Pastoral Worker. Kevin Mullally started work as Parish Pastoral Worker in St. Brigid's and Pelletstown in September 2010. He has made an outstanding contribution to the life of our parish in so many ways. He is the anchor of the Liturgy Group involved in every aspect of liturgy development, grounded in faith and with imagination and openness to new ideas. He is a very welcome addition to the Parish Team and to the Pastoral Council.

Festival of the Peoples. On Corpus Christi all the different nationalities in our parish came together at 12 o'clock Mass to celebrate our parish community. It was a joyful time and in with national costumes and flags. The Mass was greatly enhanced by the singing and the Prayers of the Faithful in so many different languages. Afterwards the celebration continued in the Community Hall where our Hospitality Team supplied refreshments with their usual style and generosity.

Murphy Report. A special liturgy of Lamentation to pray for all who had been abused was held in Holy Week with readings from Scripture, prayer and music. It was a beautiful, solemn and moving ceremony.

New Missal. A workshop was held last Thursday October 6th on the new translation of the Roman Missal and the music to suit this new Missal. It was facilitated by Fr. Damien McNeice and Fr. Pat O'Donoghue respectively of the Diocesan Liturgy Resources Centre.

Parishes Working Together. Blanchardstown, Corduff and Mulhuddart Parishes have started a journey of exploration together. It is part of the response to the Dublin Archdiocese request requesting neighbouring parishes to explore ways of cooperating together which could lead to better communication and more efficient use of resources. Our Parish Teams and Pastoral Councils are acting as a working group to move this project forward.

Parish Pastoral Space. Over the last 3 years we have had discussions from time to time on the provision of a Pastoral Space. Some of the questions that arose were: What are the pastoral needs? What kind of space do we need? Should it include a garden for meditation or reflection? Where would it be located? At present the view is that a pastoral space is required and that it should be located beside the Sacristy. The parish office would be relocated there for easy access by parishioners. It would also include a major renovation of the Sacristy which is currently in a bad condition. The new Parish Pastoral Council will continue to support this development and will see it through to a successful conclusion.

Future Planning. This Pastoral Council mentioned in our last meeting that planning was needed for two major events coming up next year:

The Eucharist Congress from June 10th to June 17th;

The 175th anniversary of the Parish. The foundation stone of the present St Brigid's Church was laid on the 13th October 1835 and the first Mass was said on the 29th October 1837.