



**St. John The Evangelist,  
Mill End & Maple Cross**



**Our Lady Help of Christians,  
Rickmansworth**



**St John Fisher,  
Chorleywood**

5 Park Road  
Rickmansworth  
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Solemnity of Christ the King  
25<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Dear parishioners,

### **Leading out of a Team**

One year ago, on this Solemnity of Christ the King, I wrote to all parishioners sharing a vision for a future direction for our parishes, following the principles set out in Fr James Mallon's book *Divine Renovation* in taking up Jesus' call, and Pope Francis' encouragement, to be and make missionary disciples.

A number of exciting things have happened this past year as we have set out on this journey together. Many of you took up my invitation to read *Divine Renovation* and it was very encouraging to see some 60 of you discussing the book in reading groups during Lent. One of these groups is still meeting regularly! Many of you also came to the two prayer evenings that we organised to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the way ahead. In June, around 60 parishioners came with us to the Niland Centre for a day focusing on the vision of Divine Renovation and Alpha.

In the early summer, some 30 parishioners participated as helpers and guests on a 'pilot' Alpha in preparation for the full launch of Alpha. We also used Alpha for Youth for our young people preparing for Confirmation. I am very grateful to everyone who participated in both these Alphas which have prepared us well for the full launch of Alpha this autumn. As I write, our first full season of Alpha is coming to its conclusion. We are already becoming missionary disciples. Around 30 people are currently participating as guests. Some are parishioners, but some are not! We have a wonderful Alpha team of around 20 leaders and helpers. Simultaneously we have been running a season of Alpha for youth for 30 young people, with a team consisting of both adults and young people, who participated in the previous Alpha for Youth. There is so much to celebrate - lives are already being changed!

In March 2019, our new Joint Parish Pastoral Council (JPPC) will come into being. Its principal role will be to work out a long-term plan as to how we will implement the vision and principles of parish renewal across our parishes in the coming years.

Today I want to let you know that, from January, I will also be instituting a new structure into our three parishes - a Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The role of the SLT will be to work closely with me in delivering the renewal that we are seeking, based on the Divine Renovation model. Whilst the role of the JPPC will be strategic - looking at the big picture - the role of the SLT will be tactical - to work very closely with me in planning the practical ways in which we will deliver the vision for parish renewal being developed by the JPPC.

In addition to myself, Fr Damian and Anke, our parish youth coordinator, the SLT will consist of three parishioners, one from each parish. I have given a great deal of thought and prayer as to whom to invite to be part of my first SLT. In doing so, I have sought parishioners who share the vision for parish renewal; who will bring strengths and experience that I don't have; who would be willing and able to work as part of a team that embraces the values of openness, healthy conflict and trust.

I am delighted to tell you today that the three parishioners who will be joining Fr Damian, Anke and I in forming the SLT are Anne Lorrimer-Roberts, Geraldine Page and Paul Forrest.

Anne Lorrimer-Roberts has been a parishioner at St John Fisher for nearly five years and before that was a parishioner at St John's, Mill End for 11 years. Anne is a Reader at Mass, a Welcomer and is currently a member of St John Fisher PPC and a member of our Alpha team.

Geraldine Page has been a parishioner at St John the Evangelist for over 45 years. Geraldine is a Minister of Communion, a 1<sup>st</sup> Communion and Children's Liturgy catechist, a member of our Chess Valley SVP and has served on St John's PPC and, in more ways than I can list here, is very involved in the day to day life of the parish.

Paul Forrest has been a parishioner of Our Lady's for 12 years and during all that time has been one of our RCIA catechists. Paul is also a Reader at Mass and is a member of our Chess Valley SVP. Paul has served as both a member and Chair of Our Lady's PPC. Paul also looks after health and safety issues in the parish.

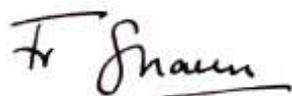
I am deeply grateful to Anne, Geraldine and Paul for accepting my invitation to join the SLT, which will commence its work in January 2019 in preparation for the launch of the new JPPC in March 2019.

I am very excited about this new venture and not a little daunted by it too! As priests we are not, on the whole, trained to lead out of a team. However, I strongly believe that it is the healthy and right way for me to exercise my leadership as parish priest. Fr James Mallon has said that there is no such thing as a balanced person, but there is such a thing as a balanced team! I sincerely believe that Anne, Geraldine and Paul, together with Fr Damian and Anke, will bring about a balanced team to help lead us to become even more the missionary disciples Jesus calls, and Pope Francis encourages, us to be.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King, we reflect on the kind of kingship which Jesus exercised - a kingship built on service. This is the kind of leadership that I am called upon to exercise as your parish priest. I cannot devolve my responsibilities for leadership of these parishes to anyone else, but I can exercise them collaboratively by leading out of a team. I intend to do this by directly supporting the members of the SLT in their new leadership roles alongside me.

Please pray for each member of this new SLT and for the success of our work together. The task that we are about to undertake will be an important, exciting and challenging step on our journey of being even more oriented towards evangelisation and the making of missionary disciples.

With every blessing



Fr Shaun Church  
Parish Priest