**Parish Annual General Meeting 2020/21**

**Senior Leadership Team Report**

Since the last Annual Meeting we only managed to hold two meetings face-to face prior to the start of the COVID-19 restrictions, and since the end of March 2020 we have met fortnightly via Zoom, which has been a powerful tool to help us to continue to work together. As your SLT we have continued to embrace the principles of the Divine Renovation movement to develop a culture within our parishes that encourages people to become missionary disciples throughout these difficult times and we lay members of the SLT have been privileged to be able to support Father Shaun and Father Damian in this endeavour, often acting as a sounding board for them and by providing constructive feedback on proposals under discussion.

Key tasks undertaken in the past year are as follows:

1. In Lockdown 1 we established a support network for vulnerable and isolated members of our parish communities to request assistance with shopping, etc. or just to access a friendly ear or face via phone or video for a chat. Initial access to the network is via the lay SLT members who then ask for assistance from a team of volunteers specially set up for the purpose. A number of people have contacted us, but generally the service has not been as well used as anticipated; partly because Father Shaun and Father Damian already made regular telephone contact with the most vulnerable and isolated people in the parish, and possibly because parishioners may already have had established support networks at their disposal.
2. After the first lockdown in 2020 and once places of worship were given permission to reopen, the SLT established a group of volunteer stewards and cleaners from across all three parishes and drafted rosters to ensure that initially Our Lady’s could open safely for private prayer for our three communities.
3. Each SLT Parish Representative has also led the ongoing task forces for our respective parishes to oversee the preparations and ongoing health and safety requirements for the opening of our churches for public worship in order to comply with the COVID-19 lockdown rules in operation at any particular time. This has ensured that our churches are COVID-safe environments and can operate as normally as possible for private prayer and the public celebration of Mass and other services. This also has meant working with parishioners to ensure that there are adequate volunteer teams of stewards and cleaners available for Sunday Masses and at other times such as Christmas and during the mini lockdown in November. The task forces continue to meet on an ad hoc basis to deal with the various COVID-related circumstances which affect our communities.
4. The SLT members have supported our priests in their work of establishing an online community to ensure that our parishes continue to flourish whilst we are unable to easily meet face-to-face. In this respect we have provided Fr Shaun and Fr Damian with feedback and encouragement on the establishment of our Mass live-streaming service, bible study groups and now Kairos.
5. Finally, the SLT has also been active in supporting the continuation of the parish sacramental programmes such as First Communion, Confirmation and RCIA. It was a delight to bring these programmes to final fruition in the autumn of 2020 once churches were allowed to reopen for public worship.

The coming year will undoubtedly continue to bring new challenges as the impact of the pandemic is still far from over in terms of the blight it imposes on our daily life. However, as infection and death rates fall, and the vaccine rollout continues apace we can hopefully return to a more normal life as a church community, particularly in our ability to join together for worship and in our ongoing parish mission.

Much still needs to be done which has been hold during the pandemic; for example, the development of further new lay ministries to support our priests. We expect it will be a busy time for the SLT and the parishes once restrictions start to lift and we will continue to serve you as your SLT to the best of our abilities.