



Growing in Faith

Our parishes • Our priests • Our place in the world

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER & YEAR-END REPORT



A Holiday Message from His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols



The Advent Season is a time of expectation. As we give thanks for all the blessings received over the course of the last year, Advent invites us to prepare, with hope, for great joy yet to come. Soon, we will rejoice in Our Saviour's birth. He comes into the world so that we might be saved. Jesus is the mercy of God made flesh. What greater gift can there be? During the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which begins on 8th December, let us open our hearts to this wonderful gift, so that in turn we may offer to others that same mercy lavished upon us. My prayer is that we may all, together as one diocese, be joyful missionaries of mercy carrying hope to all in need of it.

Our common mission of mercy is very much supported by the fruits of the Growing in Faith campaign. Careful stewardship of the funds you have donated has enabled the launch of several key diocesan initiatives and many excellent parish projects. It is my pleasure to share with you in this newsletter the early fruits of our labours together. They testify to the success of Growing in Faith. Thank you most sincerely for supporting your parish and the wider mission of our diocese, especially through Growing in Faith.

As I look forward to 2016, I know that there are many more good things to come, additional projects that will be brought to fruition. I am confident that these projects will strengthen our witness to the boundless mercy of God shining forth so brilliantly from the face of the Christ-child born of Mary. May the joy of the Christmas season remain always in your heart and may God bless throughout the New Year.

With the assurance of my prayers,

Yours devotedly

Vincent Nichols

Archbishop of Westminster

PROGRESS OVERVIEW

The Growing in Faith campaign ended in late 2014, and 2015 was the first full year of the implementation phase of the overall plan. Much of 2015 was devoted to carefully administering the programme and activating the projects promised. Our commitment to you is to be prudent, transparent, accountable, and to ensure high impact, touching the very core of our mission – to serve God's people and reach out in faith and love.

These practical works of faith would not be possible without the participation, prayers and tangible support of parishioners and friends across the Diocese. More than 40 parish projects have been launched with Growing in Faith funds earmarked at the parish level. A summary list is contained in this report. There is much more to come at the parish level, with more than 150 additional projects being organised by the parishes. The Growing in Faith team is eager to disburse funds held in trust for the parishes, once their applications are in order and submitted by the local parish priest.

In July 2015 the Diocese opened its safe house for female victims of human trafficking and slave labour, another part of the Growing in Faith campaign. Over fifteen victims have been received as of October this year, rescued from the horrors of forced mental and physical captivity.

Allen Hall seminary boasts another large contingent of Seminarians (record numbers!). We've repaired the immediate damage to the walls, ceilings, floors and trim in the library and other rooms, and now are focused on selecting replacement structures to replace the rotted and uninhabitable educational classroom buildings on its grounds. This is possible as a result of the campaign.

Cantas Westminster continues to expand, in both its network and its programming, coordinating more parishes to greater social activity across London and Hertfordshire. From the opening of regional pastoral "hubs", to expanding school breakfast and homeless sheltering programmes, to enlarging the network of food banks, Caritas is strengthening its position as a lever for social action and coordination.

For the care of sick and retired priests, thanks to Growing in Faith funds, the Diocese has put into place with confidence an existing properties redevelopment scheme, taking underutilised facilities and converting them into flats for elderly retired priests. Six projects are in the design phase, with two flats opening in 2016. This year an additional 10 newly retired priests have had their accommodations looked after. And there's more to come as we address a twenty-year horizon of retiring priests, to whom we are committed in ensuring a safety net.