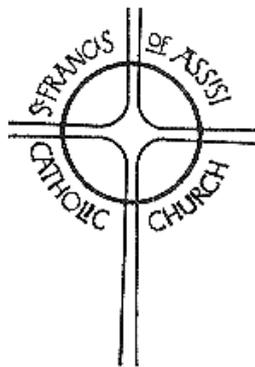


Annual Report of St Francis of Assisi Parish



2010 - 2011

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Mission, Justice and Peace

“And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

St Francis of Assisi’s Justice and Peace Group provides a forum for the members of the parish who are working in the areas of justice and peace to discuss, plan and coordinate activities concerned with local, national and global issues concerned with justice and peace. These include fund-raising, awareness, and spiritual activities.

The Parish Pantomime, and other events such as Dr Who nights, support Cafod. The Traidcraft stall runs after 11am Mass each week and after 9am Mass on the first Sunday of the month. The parish, especially the Dance Group, raises funds for Sr Helen’s work in Rwanda. Coffee and tea are collected for St Wilfrid’s Centre. Christmas presents and Easter eggs are collected for the Roundabout Project. The parish also supports financially and directly Church Action on Poverty in its awareness raising and campaigning efforts locally.

Many parishioners are active on their own account in the support of local, national and overseas charities.

Pastoral Care, Community

The highlight of this year was Fr Kevin Thornton’s 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, which was celebrated on Saturday 28th May 2011 with a parish Mass at 12 noon followed by a party. The Church was full with mainly parishioners from our parish but a few friends and parishioners from previous parishes joined us, much to the delight of Fr Kevin. The Mass was followed by a party with much of the congregation staying to enjoy the lovely food. A big thank you to everyone who came and helped, either in the preparation, during the event or and with clearing up afterwards.

In the next year we hope to:

- Set up a social committee, to help us organise the social events the parish wants
- Help to promote any parish groups that need more support
- Continue to make progress on the visiting of the sick, elderly and housebound

Youth Work, Nurture

This was a year of consolidation in this area, due to the fact that some of the members were new to the parish, all were new to the Parish Council, and there was a change in the structure when Brigitte Garcia moved away. There are plans to develop the Holy Communion programme to include an input for parents. There are also embryo plans to produce a parish magazine, but the success of this venture will depend on volunteers who are ready to come forward to edit and submit articles for publishing.

Hopefully with a more consistent membership this area of the parish council will develop its remit further in the next year.

With this in mind this section of the parish council will seek to develop the following areas:

Youth

- To support and promote wherever necessary ongoing projects that seek to develop the spirituality of young people. These may include the Youth Mass, Children's Liturgy, the Lourdes pilgrimage and other youth initiatives involving young people in the parish
- To build up and facilitate the programmes that prepare young people of the parish for the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Nurture

- To nurture the community spirit within the parish in particular to promote, support and facilitate whole parish events that bond all parishioners together.
- To look into the feasibility of producing a parish magazine that disseminates news that involves the parish and parishioners of St Francis.
- To look into existing procedures that welcome new parishioners into the parish and to look into possible ways to improve this further, if necessary.

Younger Children's Liturgy Group

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." Luke 18: 16-18

St Francis of Assisi Younger Children's Liturgy Group welcomes children aged 0-7, accompanied by a responsible parent or other carer. We have large numbers of children attending Younger Children's Liturgy, often as many as 40 children. It forms an important part of the 11am Mass, and the life of the Parish.

The Liturgy is just that: the Liturgy of the Word for children. The children and their carers light a candle to invite Jesus to the Liturgy, do an act of penitence, listen to the Gospel for the day, and respond to it in an age-appropriate way, and say prayers for themselves, the church and the world. The responses sometimes include drama, art or craft work, to encourage the children to reflect on what the Gospel means for them. These may be brought up to the altar during the offertory.

This year, we have specially marked Advent and Lent, including the 'Alleluia box', where we 'put the Alleluia away', to get it out on Easter Sunday. We also regularly contribute to the Parish's Justice and Peace work by praying for children in other parts of the world.

The numbers of leaders on the rota has once again dropped to a critically low point, in spite of having recruited two new leaders. Anyone who would like to lead Younger Children's Liturgy should approach any of the current leaders, whose names and details are displayed in the Narthex.

Liturgy, Spirituality and Faith Formation

In addition to regular services, and the First Holy Communion Classes, over the past year we provided:

- Advent: a short Advent service of quiet prayer, readings and contemplation
- Lent: a series of events around the Stations of the Cross as a journey towards Easter which involved readings, hymns, contemplative and discussion sessions.
- Eastertide: a celebration of the Via Lucis - the Stations of Light - which have 14 stations, celebrating Jesus's ministry between Easter and Pentecost. One evening session held as a taster and those attending wish it to be repeated next Eastertide.
- information for parishioners regarding the introduction of the new liturgy by various means - a discussion evening, booklets, encouraging attendance at the Diocesan event held at All Saints School on 9th July (which a number of parishioners found useful), and Mass cards.

Over the coming year we plan to:

- use the introduction of the new translation to provide the opportunity to explore more deeply the various parts of the Mass.
- provide resources for small groups to explore aspects of the liturgy further.
- Advent: provide some quiet evenings for Advent preparation.
- provide some evenings of learning, discussion and prayer exploring the Creed.
- Lent: provide a series of events for Lenten preparation.
- Eastertide: provide the opportunity for parishioners to engage in following the Stations of Light next Eastertide, either as one evening or Sunday afternoon session, or a series throughout Eastertide depending upon what parishioners would prefer.

Communications

This year the communication section has selected and purchased a stand alone audio-visual system for the church and hall (this system is independent of the church's existing audio system)

The new AV system consists of:

- Amplifier/mixer (approx 600W)
- CD/DVD/BlueRay player
- Projector
- Hand held radio mic
- Large screen (2.5m diagonal)
- Two high power speakers with optional stands
- Trolley, all the equipment can be stored on the trolley except for the screen and the two speaker stands

All this equipment will enable various events to take place in both the hall and the church which require high quality images and sound; this is especially important with the new liturgy coming online in the near future.

This year the Parish Directory was reviewed and updated to incorporate the latest activities that take place across the Parish. The directory contains almost 20 pages of information and contacts and is given to new Parishioners.

The content of the Parish directory is also the basis for the information on the Parish Website which has also been brought up to date. The website continues to be well used with over 4,000 visits over the year and our pages being viewed over 10,000 times. One of the most viewed pages is the Franciscan newsletter which is now emailed out to individuals who have signed up to this service.

Maintenance and Finance

Maintenance

1. Gardening: a big thanks to everyone who volunteered to help tidy and maintain the garden over the last year. We employed a young gardening firm to support the volunteers, and we believe the gardens are well presented thanks to their combined efforts.

2. New shed: a new shed was purchased last year to store gardening tools etc, and was kindly erected by volunteers. Thank you!

3. New fridge: a new larger fridge was purchased at a discounted cost, and installed in the meeting room upstairs. This can now be used for events in the Parish.

Finance

1. Match funding for major appeals: Agreement was reached in the Parish Council to 'match fund' up to £500 from parish funds for collections from parishioners for authorised appeals. This means that each £1 you donate as a parishioner become £2 for the charity.

This was done for the East Africa Famine Appeal by CAFOD with specific agreement at Council to fully match donations received in this case.

2. Gift Aid: Gift Aid (ie the government giving tax back for contributions made by tax payers) continues to grow and make a big difference to parish and diocese funds.

The parish received six new Gift Aid Declarations in the past year. Thanks everyone who has signed up.

The Gift Aid scheme was audited by the diocese this year, and thanks must be extended to the hard work of Paul Doherty and David Kay who count and bank the weekly collections and maintain detailed records. Thanks also go to Edmund King who manages the Gift Aid scheme and to Fr Kevin who oversees the scheme.

NB: Gift Aid is worth 25p for every £1 donated by tax payers, and costs the donors no more. If you would like to sign up please speak to Fr Kevin, one of the PC members or see the forms on the notice boards.

2012 Plans

Maintenance:

Plans are in place to:

- Prune the shrubs and larger trees if required
- Continue general maintenance of the gardens
- Continue caring for the fabric of our Church.

A suggestion of installing a dishwasher was discussed this year but turned down for several reasons. This may be revisited next year.

Finance:

A gift aid promotion takes place every two years, and so it is likely that an update and further appeal will be given in April / May to ensure that new parishioners are aware of the scheme, and that the parish is making it easy for everyone to support the scheme if they wish.

Parish Covenant with the Poor

We the parishioners of St Francis of Assisi wish to follow the guidance of Pope John Paul II and our Bishop John and commit ourselves anew to our Covenant with the Poor. We will express solidarity with our impoverished brothers and sisters throughout the world by wealth sharing, campaign action and through our prayers and liturgies

We promise ...

Wealth sharing

- To support **St Wilfrid's** Centre, by providing fairly traded tea, coffee and sugar regularly; **Hallam Caring Service**; the **Roundabout Project** at Christmas and Easter; the **SVP** Furniture Store and shop
- To support the **Goodwill Villages** in India; the work of the **Medical Missionaries of Mary** in Rwanda; **APF boxes** for the missions; the annual **CAFOD Lent and Harvest Fast Days**
- To have a **CAFOD** Parish Contact and participate in the CAFOD parish links scheme
- To offer fairly traded goods for sale after Mass on Sundays and to use **Fairtrade** tea and coffee at parish functions
- To encourage an act of self-denial or fasting on Fridays
- To respond to international emergency appeals in times of disaster

Campaigning

- To support **Church Action on Poverty**; **City of Sanctuary**; CAFOD's **Live Simply** Campaign; **Sheffield Initiative for Fair Trade**]
- To take an active part in **campaigning** or lobbying on Justice and Peace issues locally, nationally and globally
- To support the work of our parish's Justice and Peace Group, the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission and local ecumenical Justice and Peace initiatives

Prayer and Liturgy

- To celebrate **Mass** regularly for the **intentions of the impoverished of the world**
- To include intentions for the poor in bidding prayers at each Mass, and to **pray** for Justice and Peace in our prayer groups, and at Friday adoration, where appropriate
- To include, where appropriate, a focus on Justice and Peace issues in **children's liturgies**
- To include in our liturgies, where appropriate, **music** that reflects global Justice and Peace issues
- To integrate a Justice and Peace perspective into our **preaching** of the gospel
- To include a Justice and Peace dimension in our **sacrament preparation**
- To maintain **youth** involvement and listen to the voices of youth on Justice and Peace issues

- To renew our Covenant with the Poor on a regular basis, during Sunday Masses