



## Holy Family Parish

### A Vision for the Future Update - December 2018

Fr Paul Strain Adm. together with the Finance Committee and Pastoral Council thank you for your continuing patience and support in relation to the development of A Vision for the Future. We had been hopeful that the process would be nearing conclusion at this stage, however it has proved necessary to stop and reflect upon the reality of changing circumstances within the parish and wider Pastoral Community and take account of factors that will influence our decision making for the longer term, including:

- the amalgamation of Little Flower Girls' School and St. Patrick's College, Bearnageeha in 2017 to form Blessed Trinity College and the potential development of a new school building (subject to consideration by CCMS and the Department of Education)
- the continuing downward trend in weekly Mass attendance within the Parish, currently around 1450 which represents a 20% decrease over the past 5 years
- the formation of the North Belfast Pastoral Community in 2017 and the uncertainty as to how this may impact on our Vision for the Future

It has been necessary therefore to revise the options in light of these changing circumstances while continuing to prioritise the further development of a vibrant parish community and providing opportunities for evangelisation to become a Mission Church as Pope Francis encourages in his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.

To this end, a focussed Project Group with external representation and working to a specific time frame will be convened and chaired by Fr Paul Strain Adm. to facilitate deliberations in relation to the revised options. Professional services will be commissioned as required before making a recommendation to the Pastoral Council and Finance Committee.

In the meantime, progress has been made by Father Paul Strain together with the Pastoral Council and Finance Committee in relation to the management of parish resources to support the development of A Vision for the Future. In particular:

- In response to the clear support demonstrated at the consultation meeting in January 2016 and subsequent feedback for the construction of a Columbarium in the parish, a feasibility study was undertaken and a preliminary proposal to site a Columbarium in Holy Family Church has been submitted to the Diocese. If approved, it will be necessary to develop a business case to support the proposal.
- The establishment of hospitality and toilet facilities on St Therese site has been identified as a short-term priority. Following assessment of the condition of the building, it has been concluded that remedial work required to support the provision of hospitality facilities in St Therese Presbytery is not a viable option, however alternative possibilities are being actively explored and we anticipate that appropriate facilities can be provided in the very near future.
- The Presbytery at the Church of the Resurrection is surplus to requirements in all options under consideration and will be placed on the open market for sale.

A further update will be provided when the work of the Project Group has been completed, however, should you wish to seek clarification or comment on any issue in the meantime, please contact the Parish Office either by telephone: 028 90743119 or email: [holyfamily@downandconnor.org](mailto:holyfamily@downandconnor.org). We ask for your ongoing prayers and support as we continue to work towards developing A Vision for the Future of Holy Family parish.

**Father Paul Strain Adm.**

**Pastoral Council**

**Finance Committee**