



The Church in St. John's and St. Mary's

WALKING TOGETHER

A Journal for our Journey

Issue 1

Spring 2023

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THEMES FOR THIS EDITION:

- Prayer:**
 Pope Francis shares with us his call to prayer and we have responses to that call.
- Invitation:**
 A number of our parish ministries share details of their activities and invite you to consider joining and supporting their work.



Welcome to your Parish Synod Journal - Walking Together

The parishes of St. Mary's and St. John's have worked together to produce what we hope will become a regular feature of our parish life. It is very much a home-produced newsletter put together by your fellow parishioners.

Its main purpose is to share and celebrate all aspects of our parish life as well as our activities of faith and mission out in our wider local and global communities and to encourage and support everyone to find ways of 'walking together'

through our parish life or beyond; that might be through prayer or other practical activity.

Each edition will have different themes so that we can reflect, explore and share the widest range of interests across our diverse church and wider community.

We hope you find this journal interesting and useful. If you have any suggestions for improvement or ideas for topics to cover on our journey, please get in touch at: walkingtogether2023@gmail.com



An Invitation to You

Are you called to be a reader in Church?

The reader proclaims the Scripture readings used in the **Liturgy of the Word** from the lectionary.

The general instruction of the Roman Missal tells us:

"In the readings. God is speaking to his people, opening up to them the mystery of the redemption and salvation, and nourishing their spirit, and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word".

As with all ministries exercised on behalf of the Christian community, it is important to prepare the readings well in advance and give due consideration to the passage prayerfully and reflectively. If the minister of the word prepares with prayer, he or she will be helping others to

Can you offer your talents to this essential ministry?

New readers will be offered support and advice by the reader team with an opportunity to practice using the microphone in Church.

If you would like to become a reader in our parishes please speak with Canon Martin, John Murphy or contact the parish office.





Pause for Prayer

Pope Francis says, “Our Prayer cannot be restricted to an hour on Sundays. It is important to have a daily relationship with the Lord”. Here some of our parishioners tell us how they pray. We thank them for sharing.

“This is a prayer I use quite often... Need quiet place... time to think... see what God says to me.”

I want to focus on You, Lord, and to shut out all the distractions of the world. For these next few minutes its only You and me, God. You are Spirit, but you are a God who knows us so intimately. I like to imagine You sitting right here beside me, because of your promise that you are Emmanuel - always "with us". I pray to you my Father above, that you influence all decisions I, my family and my friends make today.

“When I am having a hard time and I find it hard to pray, this line adapted from the psalms becomes my mantra.”
Hold me in the palm of your hand.

“The Morning Offering reminds me to give my entire day with all its ups and downs to God.”

Jesus, through the most pure heart of Mary, I offer you all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of your Divine Heart, and particularly for the intentions of our Holy Father the Pope.

“I don’t find praying easy, but I was given a Prayer A Day diary and it has really helped me.”

While we cannot supply such a diary for everyone in both our parishes, can we suggest a helpful website? www.loyolapress.com has lots of ideas for praying and reflection, including a daily 3-Minute Retreat. You can sign up to have a 3-Minute Retreat automatically sent to you every day of Lent.

“I attended a reflection afternoon for Readers. At the end of the session, we were issued with a pocket-sized copy of St John’s Gospel. This was the 100th anniversary copy of those handed out to soldiers in the War of 1914-1918. The front cover stated “Active Service” and “Please carry this in your pocket and read it every day”. I found this very moving. We were reminded that “Active Service” is an invitation to all Christians as we answer God’s call in our own lives today. This quote from John’s Gospel inspires me every day”.

Jesus answered, “*I am the way and the truth and the life*”.



What is a Catechist?

A Catechist is a member of the church willing to teach others by word and example about Christianity.

They help to run after school Sacramental Preparation for our children.

In St. Mary’s it’s the “After School Club” and in St. John’s, the “Saturday Club”. We help children prepare for the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist.

In addition, Betty Doherty and Siobhan Gregory from St. Mary’s are working with Polish children to help them on their faith journey and assist them through language difficulties.

Betty and Siobhan enjoy their time helping to prepare Dominik and Norbert, who are very interested and joyful at being introduced to prayer; they love saying the Our Father, and hearing Bible stories as they learn about the Sacraments.

The children from both parishes were confirmed by Canon Martin on 2nd February 2023 and will receive their First Communion in May 2023.



Parish Council

Our Parish Pastoral Councils have been re-established post-pandemic and meet regularly with Canon Poland. Their role is to consult and advise Canon, assisting him as he carries out his ministry. They promote the church’s mission to live and communicate the love and values of Christ in the world.

In order to do this effectively we need to listen to one another. So, if you have any observations, suggestions, reflections, please let one of us know.

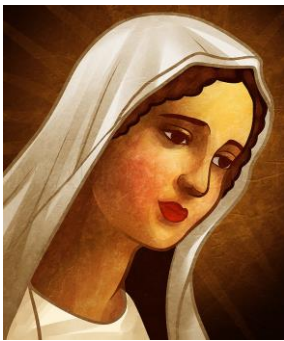
St Mary's	St John's
Mirella Badiali	Bernadette Anderson
Pauline Baillie	Elizabeth Evans
Barbara Griffin	David Hume
Elizabeth Lynch	Martin Kelly
Martin McAllister	Christine McGuire
Laura McNeil	John Murphy
Christopher Simpson	Gerry Pollock
Kevin Thomas	Tam Reid
Peter Timmons	Brenda Robertson
	Teresa Thornton



Pope Francis has written three Encyclicals during his pontificate

Lumen Fidei, The light of Faith, 2013:

Focuses on our relationship with God. Pope Benedict had almost finished it when he resigned and Pope Francis completed it. *The encyclical traces the history of the faith of the church* (from the call of God to Abraham and the people of Israel, to the resurrection of Jesus), discusses the relationship between reason and faith, the church's role in the transmission of the faith, and the role faith plays in the building of societies in search of the common good. The text concludes with a prayer to the Virgin Mary, who is presented as a model of faith.



Laudato Si, Praise Be, 2015:

Is the second encyclical of Pope Francis. The encyclical has the subtitle "on care for our common home." The Earth is God's gift to us, full of beauty and wonder, where the fruits of the Earth belong to everyone. But what we see today is that our common home has never been so hurt and mistreated as it has been in the last 200 years.

Fratelli Tutti, All Brothers and Sisters, 2020:

Is a radical challenge, offering a blueprint for a world after coronavirus. It turns the world upside down, placing human dignity at the centre. And it links back to the message of interconnectedness, which was also at the heart of 'Laudato Si'. As Pope Francis said at the Angelus, just before Fratelli Tutti was released, "The signs of the times clearly show that human fraternity and care of creation form the sole way towards integral development and peace."



St Mary's SSVF Conference



Frederick Ozanam - ssvglobal.org

The St. Mary's conference of the SSVF currently have their meeting on a fortnightly basis. The conference seeks to provide spiritual support and practical assistance to those in need by listening to them and visiting them in their homes.

Many visits are made to houses, care homes and hospitals to keep contact with and provide spiritual relief to the elderly and sick.

Support is provided across the community including food parcels, clothing, toiletries, cooking equipment, cleaning materials and furniture. Financial assistance is also given to help with heating, travel and emergencies. Taxi costs can also be defrayed to ensure older people and those with infirmities can get to Mass.

We also have a long-standing connection with St. Anthony's Primary School and St. Matthew's Academy where we support Breakfast Clubs and other projects. Through commendable and generous acts of charity, students and staff support our work through collections for food banks.

Over the last few years, the combined effects of the pandemic, energy costs and now cost of living problems have resulted in unprecedented requests for assistance. This has been made worse by ever decreasing services provided by local authorities and their third sector partners. During 2022 we undertook 321 visits and the trend continues in 2023.

However, with the commitment, goodwill and hard work of our members we can face the future with confidence. Not least, though, we are thankful to our kind and loyal benefactors who contribute to the work of the Society. It is their generosity and support which allows us to continue the work of our founder, Frederick Ozanam.



St. John's SSVP Conference

Wish to thank all our parishioners and patrons who supported the Society so generously in the last 2 years. Since the start of the Covid pandemic, the work of the Conference has continued in challenging circumstances. In the 2 years, 250 visits have been undertaken by members, visiting families and individuals. Assistance is given with food and energy costs. Regular spiritual home visits were undertaken and assistance given to school pupils. As well as providing assistance to the local community, we were pleased to be able to continue supporting our Twin Conference in India and Africa. Please see noticeboard in the church for further details.



The Hogmanay Ceilidh - For Ukraine



St John's hosted a Hogmanay Ceilidh in the church hall to see in the New Year. A fantastic £1,200 was raised at the event and was sent directly to Ukraine to be put to good use.

With the power cuts ongoing throughout the country, it was thought that items like rechargeable lights, power banks for mobile phones and warm blankets would be ideal.

Parishioners from 'The Three Towns' supported the night, which turned out to be a fantastic celebration of dancing, singing and games. What better way to see in the bells than in the company of family and friends.

One St. John's parishioner commented that she hasn't celebrated at Hogmanay for a long time, and then asked could we celebrate again at Burns Night! So, for those of you that missed it and those who didn't, you will be pleased to hear this will become an annual event in the St John's church hall diary.



Pope Francis on Synodality and the Holy Spirit

"...the Pope recalled the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at Pentecost, noting that (the) spirit descended at a time when the apostles were gathered together.

"They could also worship God and do good to others separately, but when they came together in unity, the doors to God's work were opened wide," he said, saying Christians are therefore called "to come together so that the marvellous works of God may be accomplished in our midst."

Some submissions to the Synod from different countries:

"The Church-home does not have doors that close, but a perimeter that continually widens" (Italy).

"Those who feel at home in the Church feel the absence of those who don't" (Ireland).

"Instead of behaving like gatekeepers trying to exclude others from the table, we need to do more to make sure that people know that everyone can find a place and a home here" (USA).

"It is important to build a synodal model (where) the only legitimate authority in the Church must be that of love and service, following the example of the Lord" (Argentina).

How we already see St John's and St Mary's parishes as synodal communities.

- A church for all generations.
- Sharing our resources and skills.
- Inclusive, open to all and a church in which more people would participate.
- Supporting the whole community both practically and spiritually.
- Providing more and different spiritual experiences based on the Gospel.
- Known in the community, reaching out to families and marginalised
- More than just a Sunday Mass provider.
- Communicating much better, keeping everyone informed, making use of technology and media.