

## **Report from the Leadership Team for the year ending 30th September 2020**

The year ending 30th September 2020 would have to be one of the most challenging years ever faced by every member of the Parish. The pandemic threw many a curve ball our way including a level 4 lockdown. All of us had to remain in a tight bubble for several weeks and the church was unavailable to us all. Even when we came out of level 4 lockdown there were restrictions still in place and some of them are still in place today as we live through a level 1 regime.

None of us have ever had to live through such a restricted way of life in our lifetime. As a member of the Leadership Team, I have to give thanks to our Priests and Parish Staff who worked tirelessly throughout all the levels of lockdown to keep us informed, safe and spiritually and emotionally supported. Their very detailed and very informative emails, phone calls and texts were well received. One has to remember that many of us were able to enjoy the free time and beautiful weather throughout Level 4 while our Priests and Parish Staff worked long hours to make life that much better for us all. We are indeed lucky to have such generous and caring people in our parish. On your behalf I salute them for their great work. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Benita Murray for her invaluable contribution as chair of the Leadership Team during the very difficult year ending 30th September 2020. Benita and her family have shifted to Wellington as her husband has taken up a position of employment there. Her warmth, humour, intelligence and very sensible decision-making is being missed by the Team. On behalf of you all I wish Benita and her family all the very best for their future years together in the capital.

The Leadership Team considers all aspects of the Parish including but not limited to financial, property, health and safety and liturgical/spiritual matters. We are fortunate to have teams looking after the more temporal aspects of the Parish which leaves the Leadership time to lead the Parish in the more spiritual aspects of the Parish. Covid 19 has challenged us all and unfortunately some former parishioners of the Parish have not returned to our community because of what we all experienced last year. Some of them are possibly afraid to get back into an environment where several hundred people are gathered to celebrate the Eucharist because of the perceived risks. I look forward to the time when we are no longer in Level 1 however, I believe we still have some water to under the bridge before that happens.

Covid 19 has also put some strain on our Parish finances because of the fact that the church was closed for some time yet the weekly expenses such as wages carried on. The finance team will explain that more fully in their report.

For some time, our Priests and the Leadership Team have been working on and promoting the need for us all to move away from just being a Parish that maintains its current existence to a Parish that is missional and welcoming. What does that mean for us all as Parishioners? I believe it means that we are a Christian Community that is kind to each other. That we get involved in more aspects of the Parish than just coming to church for one hour per week. There are many ways in which all of us can give our time to the Parish and help it run efficiently. That we greet each other warmly and get to know each other. That we accept all the different cultures who are now very much a part of our Parish and that we try to understand them. That we are hospitable to each other. Just staying behind after a mass for a few minutes and talking to a stranger or two will add so much to our community in terms of personal relationships.

God Bless you all, Grant Novak