

## ASSEMBLY REPORT-Sunday 27 August

In accordance with our parish statutes, the Wallsend-Shortland parish council called the 2017 Parish assembly to:

- Evaluate the parish plan formulated at the 2013 assembly as per today's parish council report.
- To hear and respond to reports from areas of finance and the various parish groups.
- To present proposals in line with areas of concern looking toward the next Assembly.
- To address matters raised at parish meeting held August 2015 e.g. Steering committee.

Chaired by Greg Walker, there were 57 Attendees.

The assembly began 10am with registration and a substantial morning tea courtesy of Caroline Walker and Margaret Hobbins.

Following the welcome and introduction to the day's agenda, Les Brogan led the assembled in the hymn, Every Day God, followed with a very appropriate prayer 'borrowed' from opening of the 2nd Vatican Council.

Fr Brady then addressed the group reflecting on the importance of having a vision that would underpin our deliberations and all our activities.

The first business of the day was to ratify the vision initiated by Fr Brady and discerned by the evangelisation committee, it was proposed as followed:

'Inspired by God's love we reach out in loving service to all to share the joy of the Gospel'

This new vision was accepted with a small alteration to the wording:

Changed from 'Inspired by God's love' to 'Inspired by the love of God'.

Fr Brady told us that if we allow our new vision to impact us, we will make space for the Holy Spirit to guide us as we enter into the unchartered waters of our parish future.

Saying, that being 'Inspired by the love of God', will produce a change in the culture of our parish; that we will not be driven by falling numbers or declining finances. That rather, than being minimalist in our attitude, our new vision will influence our decisions in a positive way.

The first agenda item was a summary of, the make up and role of the finance group, given by Michael Walsh (chairperson of the finance committee).

John Casey then presented a summary of parish Financial Performance - a detailed statement of Financial Income and Expenditure-and a statement of Source and Application of Funds. - John provided us with print outs of the above information.

Copies of John's report are available for interested parishioners in the foyers of each Church

Space was then given to other parish reports- which had been available in the Church foyers for perusal for four weeks prior to the assembly.

There were few questions regarding individual reports, with the exception of a Liturgy enquiry in reference to engaging young people in parish ministries.

Phil Ryan spoke to the report on WH&S, informing the assembly of the need to be alert to safety regulations so as to minimise the risks of serious injury. He also advised us that the obligation to 'test and tag' all Church appliances which, till now had been undertaken by the diocese, will be parish responsibility.

Phil responded to concerns expressed re. entry and exit to both Our Lady of Victories and St Patricks churches' grounds.

Michael Worthington spoke to the Evangelisation report, which had not been available for perusal with the earlier reports. This report further clarified the evolving of the parish vision and made mention of the evangelisation group's ongoing discernment on ways to reach and encourage the both the Churched and Unchurched.

Copies of the Evangelisation report are also available in the foyers of each Church for interested parishioners

After a coffee break came the essential work of the assembly, that is to formulate the ongoing parish plan.

Copies of the assembly proposals, were then given to out to each individual.

These proposals had arisen from concerns expressed in the recent parish survey, and from unfinished business in the current parish plan.

Conducted by Michael Worthington- five groups of approximately ten parishioners were each given the task of considering one of the suggested proposals, these were taken from one of the areas of parish life: (namely: Community & Identity-Worship and Prayer-Formation and Education-Mission and Outreach-Leadership and Structure).

Each group chose a leader and a scribe, together they considered a particular proposal with the view to- accepting as is- or to apply some modification - or to reject the proposal.

After much discussion, the agreed changes and additions were made to the proposals and taken back to bigger group.

Michael then relayed the alterations to the whole assembly for further clarification and approval in readiness for the proposals to be delivered to the council who will form the parish pastoral plan.

Around 1pm- Everyone was ready for a well earned lunch.

The sausage sizzle, which was provided by the parish and prepared by Len O'Dell, and the Sisters, was very welcome.

The last session of the assembly was dedicated to the steering committee.

The Steering committee was formed in February 2017. It arose from a presentation brought forward by Margaret Hobbins and John Casey at the 2015 parish meeting at which they proposed the advisability of a five year parish plan.

This segment, very ably presented by Steering Committee chairperson Tegan Pratt, gave the assembled an appreciation of the dedication of that group to their task.

Prior to the assembly the steering committee circulated two proposals for consideration by the assembly. These generated much discussion on the day and paved the way for ongoing parishioner input. Two proposals were put forward and within each proposal there were a number of options. These options are interchangeable between the proposals.

The proposals will now be re-circulated for a period of four weeks, during which time parishioners are encouraged to communicate any constructive thoughts, opinions or additional ideas that could be applied to this work in progress.

**Copies of the proposals will be available in the Church foyers and upon request via email .  
Any additional ideas or thoughts can be provided to the parish e.g. by email.**

After appreciation was expressed for all those who contributed to the success of the day, Fr Brady closed with a prayer at approximately 3pm

*Elizabeth Hicks*