

## Lay Formation— Volunteering in Parishes ‘To love and serve the Lord’

The cajoling, the pleading, the white lies (“it’s only for an hour or so”, “it’s just this once”) and the pressing of the Catholic guilt button are the familiar tools of persuading people to take on tasks in a parish. That, perhaps, is why the experience is so unsatisfactory for all concerned: it is taking on a burden. Change the frame of reference and it can become a much more uplifting experience.

A group of priests – Mgr Paul Donovan, Fr Francis Higgins and Fr John Beirne - has been investigating a programme developed by Barbara Wallace in Arundel & Brighton Diocese and now being promoted by an Anglican priest, Graham Lewis. They spent a day with Graham at the house of the Daughters of St Paul in Slough unpacking what is involved.



“Underpinning the programme is the sense that in baptism we are all called to ministry and witness,” says Fr Paul. “See how much more positive that makes undertaking a task. It moves it from ‘helping Father out’ to ‘living out my baptismal call’.” The programme, called *To Love and Serve the Lord*, offers parishes a way to capitalize on that and foster a culture of participation.

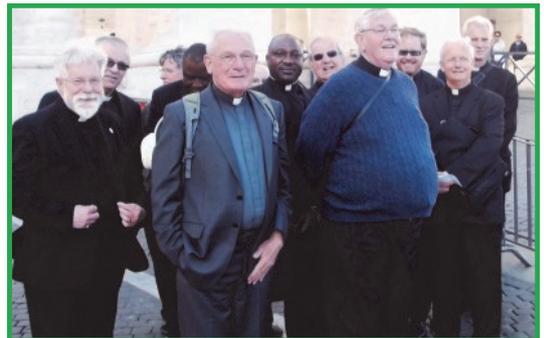
“Our first response to the programme was very positive. The leaders in a community, the Pastoral Area Council or Parish Pastoral Council, for example, would draw great strength from looking at the language the programme uses and the framework it offers.” This local feedback is now being given to the Bishop with a view to a pilot programme starting in one of the pastoral areas.

## Priestly Formation— Clergy In-Service week – Palazzola, Rome—Report by Mgr Sean Healy

After similar events which had been held in Valladolid and Ars, it was decided to visit the Eternal City. Palazzola is a retreat and conference centre in the Alban Hills around Rome. The beautiful former monastery began life in the 13th century as a Cistercian foundation and then after various changes of use (including a period as a sanatorium for the mentally insane) eventually became the summer residence of the Venerable English College.

Students who were sent to Rome to study for the priesthood were not allowed to return home to England for the summer months and, as Rome is stiflingly hot in the summer, most colleges had summer residences where students could study and relax before the start of a new academic year.

Most summer residences were sold when students were given more freedom but the English and Welsh Bishops decided to keep Palazzola. It is now a much used resource for seminarians and pilgrims alike.



The Northampton Clergy (29 including Bishop Peter) travelled to Rome on 12th May. The first evening was spent settling into Palazzola, which is perched on one side of the volcanic lake, Lago Albano. On the other side of the lake is the imposing Papal summer residence of Castel Gandolfo. Fr Michael Patey (a former student of the Venerable English College in Rome) gave a brief history of Palazzola and its environs.

The next day was a spiritual day led by Mgr Pat Kilgariff, a former Rector and Spiritual Director of the English College. Mgr Pat gave two challenging talks asking us to reflect particularly on what we seek to communicate in our homilies. Most people valued the space for prayer and personal reflection.

The next day was spent in Rome. Some of the group attended the weekly audience of Pope Francis. Leading up to the feast of Pentecost, the Pope was giving his weekly catechesis on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and he spoke about the gift of Fortitude. After lunch we visited the English College and had an expert tour with our seminarian at the College, Michael Rakowski.

The following day was led by Mgr Rod Strange, the Rector of the Pontifical Beda College. He spoke about the challenges of preaching and living the new evangelisation in a very secular, post Christian society.

The final day was a trip to Castel Gandolfo and a quiet, reflective Mass in the Bernini Church of San Tommaso de Villanova. Bishop Peter was the main celebrant and preacher. Later that day we returned to the UK, refreshed and renewed by our Roman pilgrimage.



## Sick and Retired Clergy

You may still see the sick and retired clergy second collection at Mass and wonder why this is still needed, now that funds for the support of sick and retired clergy are being raised by **Together In Faith**.

The cost of supporting our clergy in times of ill health or retirement has grown over the years, not only because of an increase in the number of retired priests but also because of the increased cost of services and living costs.

Ongoing second collections and other ad hoc donations, such as legacies, will continue to be an important way of ensuring that these costs are covered in the future and that our priests who, have served our Diocese and communities, receive the support they deserve.

Importantly, while many parishioners pledged donations to **TIF**, there are some that did not and would still like the opportunity to donate specifically to the sick and retired clergy fund.

We are very grateful for support of this cause through **TIF** donations, as well as any past or future donations by other means.



## Parish Project News— A 'sound' investment

The parish of Sacred Heart in Flitwick has been putting its parish share of **Together In Faith** funds to good use through a variety of small projects to benefit the church.

In addition to new carpets and chairs, the church has now benefited from a new sound system. Hugh Davies writes: "After 30 years and a lot of 'patching' our sound system finally packed up, so we needed a new one. Luckily our **Together In Faith** funds have enabled us to invest in a good quality system."



After much research we decided to go for a firm called DM Music who were highly recommended. They have installed new speakers in the church and 'back room', three new microphones and three facility boxes which enable us to plug in other music sources and a hearing loop.

We expected technology to have improved but the difference in audibility and sound quality is amazing - the added bonus is the ability to use the system more flexibly. The system was not cheap but when buying sound it is always best to buy sound sound."

## Financial Summary Facts and Figures

We are delighted to have exceeded the £6 million milestone, which means we are nearly two thirds of the way through the campaign. Please do keep the Campaign in your prayers.

The total active **Together In Faith** pledges are currently worth £9.37 million. If these pledges are received we will meet our targets of raising £3.5m for Sick and Retired Clergy, £1m for Priestly Formation and £500k for Lay Formation which will be a fantastic achievement!

Expenditure to date across the three main causes was as follows:

- Sick and Retired Clergy   £ 831,227
- Priestly Formation       £ 483,834
- Lay Formation           £ 10,479

In addition to the above, £382,708 has been transferred to religious orders who run parishes in our Diocese, to help support their sick and retired clergy and seminarians.

## What you have contributed so far:

Gifts	Gift Aid	Total
£5,327,400	£1,119,352	£6,446,752



## Supporting Parishes

Eighteen Parishes across the Diocese so far have benefited from **Together In Faith** parish share funds. A total of £912,797 has been spent to date on projects ranging from parish missions and hymn books to building projects providing additional facilities.

A parish is able to carry out its project once it has exceeded their **TIF** goal, gained the required approval and accrued sufficient funds to cover the cost of the project. More details about your own parish can be found in the personalised e-mail/letter accompanying this newsletter or through your parish.

A total of £341,950 across a further 16 parishes has been transferred for debt reduction to date. These parishes chose to use their **Together In Faith** funds to repay debt, which generally arose from historic essential projects, helping them become more financially stable and saving money on interest.

## Campaign Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord God. Through your goodness, the Church in the Diocese of Northampton has flourished for 160 years. We have endeavoured by your grace, to contribute our time, talents and treasure in building a community of believers in our parishes, with the Lord Jesus Christ as our foundation.

As we work **Together In Faith**, we ask for the grace of your Holy Spirit.

So that we might know your will and be strengthened in our work, we ask for your blessings and for the patronage of Blessed Mary Immaculate and of St Thomas of Canterbury.

We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, you Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever,

**Amen**

## Happy to Help...

We hope this newsletter is useful to you. Should you have any questions or need to speak to somebody about your individual pledge our **Together In Faith** Administrator is always happy to help and can be reached using the contact details below:

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