



Parish Project News— Historic Church Restoration

Together in Faith Parish share funds have enabled the parish of St Francis Assisi in Shefford, Bedfordshire, to carry out conservation works to restore and maintain this wonderful historic church dating back to 1885. As well as practical work such as replacing hot water pipes with more efficient pipes and replacing lighting, the parish undertook works to ensure the history of the building is preserved. Conservators from Lincoln University carried out work to stabilise and repair the damage to the Anselm Banner (pictured below left before and after) as well as sensitive cleaning of the Stations of the Cross (above right), revealing previously hidden exquisite colour and detail. Further work was carried out to repair and replace sympathetically parts of the stone work columns and mullions.



Before and after — the restored Anselm Banner

The repair and restoration of the impressive North window (pictured top left), created by the artist Nathaniel Westlake, was part funded using **Together in Faith** parish share funds in conjunction with gratefully received funds from the local Robert Lucas Charity.



Parish Priest Canon Bennie Noonan said "The work carried out has taken place over a long period of more than two years. An already beautiful Church has become one of the outstanding Churches in our Diocese. **Together in Faith**

came just at the right time for us - a great big Deo Gratias to all at **Together in Faith** (particularly Terrie McCann) and to our Parishioners who dug deep for such a worthy cause as continuing to keep our Catholic Faith alive in Bedfordshire".



Alex and Maria Heath

Lay Formation - Catechist Pilgrimage and Congress—Report by Alex Heath

On Thursday 26th September, thanks to funding from **Together in Faith** and childcare from some very supportive friends and family members, myself and Maria set off to take part in the International Congress and Pilgrimage for Catechists as representatives of our Diocese.

The day after our return, the Bishop's Council for Catechesis gathered. In our meetings, we seek to support each other, share ideas, network and organise events that support the work of catechesis. From this, a Day for Catechists has been organised in our Diocese led by Diana Klein, a very experienced catechist and trainer of catechists. The day will be held on Saturday 10th May 2014. We hope that many current

"Catechesis is a vocation". These were the words of Pope Francis to the delegates of the International Congress held in the Paul VI Audience Hall in Vatican City, Rome. The four day Congress and Pilgrimage formed part of the celebrations for the Year of Faith. It was a real blessing to be there, to learn more about this ministry and to represent the Diocese of Northampton.



Pilgrims gathered in St Peters Square for Mass with Pope Francis

catechists as well as those who may be interested in this ministry will come to hear Diana address the theme of 'The Vocation of the Catechist'. To find out more about this day or any other catechist events simply contact Jackie McCarthy

The address of Pope Francis and the Mass held in St Peter's Square were our highlights among many graced and inspiring moments. Pope Francis spelled out that being a catechist means starting anew from Christ which involved three aspects: "First of all, to start anew from Christ means being close to him, being close to Jesus" secondly "Starting anew with Christ means imitating him by leaving ourselves behind and going out to encounter others." And finally "starting anew with Christ means not being afraid to go with him to the outskirts".

at NORES via admin@nores.org.uk or 01582 723312. You can also ask to be added to a mailing list to be kept in touch with future events.



The Congress and Pilgrimage were organised by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelisation and it was striking how often the speakers stressed that catechesis needs a re-launching so that it can rediscover its true context within the New Evangelisation. This certainly has implications for how we should understand and practice our catechetical ministry and has encouraged us to continue to explore creative ways in which we can connect the work of evangelisation and catechesis that we are involved in within the Diocese, in our parish and in our local catholic school.

To finish, some inspiring words from the homily Pope Francis gave during the Mass: "Who are catechists? They are people who keep the memory of God alive; they keep it alive in themselves and they are able to revive it in others. This is something beautiful: to remember God, like the Virgin Mary, who sees God's wondrous works in her life but doesn't think about honour, prestige or wealth; she doesn't become self-absorbed.... Catechists are men and women of the memory of God if they have a constant, living relationship with him and with their neighbour; if they are men and women of faith who truly trust in God and put their security in him; if they are men and women of charity, love, who see others as brothers and sisters; if they are men and women of... endurance and perseverance, able to face difficulties, trials and failures with serenity and hope in the Lord; if they are gentle, capable of understanding and mercy. Let us ask the Lord that we may all be men and women who keep the memory of God alive in ourselves, and are able to awaken it in the hearts of others. Amen."

There were just over 40 of us from England and Wales among the 1600 delegates. It was affirming to share experiences and accompany each other in our profession of faith at the tomb of St Peter.



Delegates in the Paul VI Audience Hall

Priestly Formation—Calling to the Priesthood

Bishop Peter spoke frankly in his end of Year of Faith Homily about the reality of fewer priests to serve our Diocese in the coming years as the number of priests due to be ordained are fewer than the number due to retire. While we prepare for this reality Bishop Peter also asks for us to pray for priestly vocations.

The reason why men choose to become priests is ultimately because Christ is calling them. The way He calls them and the paths by which they come to Him will vary hugely, but the priesthood is always a response to God's initiative, His calling. The work of discerning a Vocation to the priesthood is the work of looking for Christ's call—and that can come, as it so often has, from what might seem the most unlikely people!

Providing those who are considering a future vocation as a catholic priest with the opportunities to explore the possibility is vital for the future of the Diocese. Together in Faith is supporting the bi-annual Vocations weekends where any men interested in the priesthood can come to find out more. **The next Vocations Weekend will be held 14th-16th February 2014 at the Cathedral in Northampton. Contact Fr. Mark Floody (Vocations Director) on 01604 714556 to find out more or express an interest in future Vocation events.**



Financial Summary

What you have contributed so far:

Gifts	Gift Aid	Total
£4,776,846	£1,008,742	£5,785,588

We are delighted to have exceeded the £5 million milestone, thanks to the commitment and generosity of our parishioners. We still have a way to go before achieving our targets for the central causes of Sick and Retired Clergy, Priestly Formation and Lay Formation. Please do keep the Campaign in your prayers.

Facts and Figures

The total active **Together In Faith** pledges are currently worth £ 9.41 million, with £4 million allocated to Parish Projects! This is due to the majority of parishes exceeding their initial goal, at which point they receive 80% of all donations received over the initial goal. We are delighted that the campaign is helping parishes across the diocese address specific local priorities, with nearly £1 million released towards projects and debt reduction to date.

Expenditure across the three main causes to date has been as follows:

- Sick and Retired Clergy £ 676,920
- Priestly Formation £ 422,334
- Lay Formation £ 9,747



For more detailed finance information, please see the Diocese website:

www.northamptondiocese.org/THEDIOCESE/TOGETHERINFAITH/tabid/402/Default.aspx

Did you know....

Donors who have finished their initial pledge are welcomed to continue using **Together in Faith** as a vehicle to donate to some or all of the central causes of Sick and Retired Clergy, Priestly Formation and Lay Formation. This can be arranged quickly and easily by contacting our Administration team using the contact details below.

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** Administration team is always happy to help and can be reached using the contact details below:

Campaign Administrator: Paula Wynn

Assistant Campaign Administrator: Amy Davies

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