

**Report of Parish Pastoral Council for 2015-2016**  
**Presented at Masses 25/26 June 2016**

I am speaking to you today on behalf of the Parish Pastoral Council. My purpose is to raise awareness of the existence and role of the Council and to invite you to become involved in one of the Ministries or other groups active in the Parish.

We are a group of 12 people who came together, this time last year, in response to a call by Fr. Brendan for volunteers to serve on a new Council for a 3-year term. Most of us had not been members of the Council previously. We hold a wide cross-section of views. For the past year, we have been focussed on getting to know each other and on identifying issues which need to be addressed.

We see our role as working with the priests of the Parish and the other Ministries and parish groups to prepare the Parish of St Thomas the Apostle for the future.

All of you are aware that the Church is going through a period of change. The number of priests available for active ministry is declining year after year. Clustering of parishes and rationalisation of Mass times is on the agenda across the Archdiocese of Dublin. All of this means that we - the people of the parish - need to take on a greater role in the life of the parish.

There are many groups active in the Parish who contribute greatly to the life of the Parish. They include our Choirs, Altar Servers, Faith Friends, Child Protection, Bereavement Support, Communications/IT, Children's Liturgy, Liturgy Group, Finance Committee, and the collectors at this Mass. This Autumn we will be inviting all those currently involved in our Ministries of the Word and of the Eucharist to renew their Ministry for a further 3-year term. We also invite anyone else who is interested in becoming a Reader or a Eucharistic Minister or in becoming involved in any of the many other groups in the parish to contact us.

I am sure you will all agree that Child Protection is an extremely important topic in all walks of life. It is the policy of the Archdiocese that all who are active in Ministry in the Parish should be Garda vetted. New vetting regulations have recently been introduced. These requirements are demanding, but we ask you to believe that they are necessary to ensure confidence in the Church's handling of child protection issues after the grievous failures of the past.

One of the high points of the year for us was the Parish Mission last November. This was very well attended and most people seemed to find it a very moving and spiritual event.

A preparation programme for parents with children for Baptism commenced during the year. This involves attendance at a 1 hour session which is held once a month.

We have looked at other issues but need to do more work on them.  
For example;

How should the Parish communicate more effectively with the wider community?

How do we reach out to young people and to those who have lost contact with the Church?

We do not yet have the answers to these questions and so would welcome your input into this discussion.

Members of the Parish Council will be in the courtyard with clipboards after Mass. We invite anyone who is interested in becoming involved in one of the Ministries or other groups, or who has comments or suggestions to offer, to speak to them.

Alternatively, you may email us at [laurellodged@eircom.net](mailto:laurellodged@eircom.net) or leave your name and contact details into the Parish Office or Sacristy.

Thank you for your attention.