

# Blackfriars Partnership



## A Letter from the Blackfriars Partnership

**Father Shaun O'Neill our Partnership Dean writes:**

I write to give you an update on the progress made by the Blackfriars Partnership, what has been achieved, where we are going and to invite you to join us in our partnership's initiatives for 2018.

In 2017 the Diocese developed the concept of partnerships; of adjacent parishes working together in spiritual development and with a shared organisation in order to help each other and to begin to better prepare for the expected shortage of priests and a reduction in the number of laity. Our Partnership consists of 14 churches and communities. It is large. This is all about preparation for the future.

Our vision is that in five years we will be able to say:

*"Blackfriars has been built on the solid foundations of fifteen communities and parishes. We are working closely together in harmony and trust with an inclusive and expanded outlook to deliver the love of Jesus to everyone. The laity, especially the young adults, are leading the day to day running of Blackfriars so that priests and the laity can fulfill their baptismal calling to be missionary disciples".*

I am pleased to report that good progress has been made and that we have a new exciting opportunity for young adults to develop as disciples.

The Partnership Development Group meets monthly and the sub groups that we formed meet regularly. I am extremely grateful for this good group of volunteers who freely give of their time and who also contribute great experience and wisdom.

The Youth Ministry sub group is working on the organisation of the sacrament of confirmation across the partnership, on events to bring the altar servers together and on working with sixth formers for the Pope John Paul II awards.

The Administration sub group is writing the Partnership Handbook on Administration to help us in the future when the needs will become greater.

The Spirituality sub group is seen as an important underpinning of our work to create a wholeness among our various communities and two events “Space for Grace” will take place on Thursday June 28<sup>th</sup> at St John Vianney and on Saturday June 30<sup>th</sup> at St Charles.

The Finance sub group continues to share information and develop policies for working together. We have a partnership bank account and a small fund contributed on a proportional basis from each of our parishes.

We also have a Liturgy sub group working on liturgies for joint celebrations as we progress as Blackfriars.

The Communications sub group has implemented controls and permissions for the handling of personal data and we have a new partnership website that will go live in the next few weeks. Its purpose is to provide information about courses and events, mass times across the partnership, churches and links to all the parish websites.

We said in our previous update that we would look at mass provision carefully, this we have done. We mapped all the churches and mass times to provide information for our priests. You will be pleased to know that they considered the provision carefully and have agreed that there does not need to be any changes at present. However the partnership has recognized that there is little slack in the system and that we may have to make adjustments over the summer period and if we lose priests that we will have to reconsider the provision of masses across Blackfriars.

Finally I want to tell you about our new Discipleship sub group that has developed from our discussions on lay leadership. We realised that developing disciples from amongst our young adults, those aged 24ish to 45ish, is an important goal for the future of Blackfriars, which we have developed with the help of the diocese. A leaflet is available at the back of the church announcing a “taster event” where you can find out more. This event will be on Saturday June 16<sup>th</sup> where we will tell you more and listen to your views. We then aim to go live in September. If you are a young adult we want hear from you because we need you for the future.

So how do you find out what is happening and how do you join in, your parish representative on the PDG is [.....], please contact them to find out more. We, the PDG commit to keeping you briefed through the newsletter, through parish activities and we will inform you as soon as the website is up and running.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2018