

# St. Brendan's Parish, Muirhouse, Motherwell

Review [Part 1] prepared by the lay supervisor of the social media of the Parish as revised and approved by Fr. Ness of the document:

***The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church,***

**issued on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 by the Prefect within the Vatican Curia of the Congregation for the Clergy,**

The Church's response to the Second Vatican Council held between 1963-1966, and changes in society and culture in the years since then, have led to new ways of delivering pastoral care in parish communities – allowing parishioners a greater opportunity, under the guidance of their priest [pastor], to offer their own particular gifts and strengths for the service of their church and the wider community.

***Pope Francis has encouraged us to seek new ways to proclaim the Gospel.*** The purpose of this document is to call parish communities, such as our community in Muirhouse, Motherwell, to see themselves as missionaries, going beyond their own boundaries in a spirit of collaboration and evangelisation. Instead of being afraid of doing something wrong, we should be more afraid of becoming so closed up, so secure, so judgmental within our existing structures ***that we fail to see the great need of our brothers and sisters who have no community of faith to support them.***

***The Church and the world can be mutually enriched by respectfully meeting with each other.*** The Word of God has inspired mankind to value human life, equality, peace, and the created world. However, the message hasn't reached everyone yet. The [Roman Catholic] Church **must now use its structures and customs in a new way – its role is the evangelisation of today's world, not the Church's own self-preservation.**

This reform of the Church's structures has particular significance for parishes. ***Parishes have always brought the Gospel to the people through the proclamation of the faith and the celebration of the Sacraments.*** They are a sign of the permanent presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his people. **However, in today's world of increased mobility and digital culture, the old idea of the parish as a specific locality is being challenged.** Nowadays, ***the personal relationships and territorial loyalty that were once fundamental to parish identity*** [our identity as well as many others] are less evident – ***many people attend a variety of churches according to need and convenience, and may not even know the other members of the congregation.*** However, ***the Holy Spirit invites us to "renew the face of the Church"*** and we must embrace this opportunity.

When considering the value of the parish in today's world, ***we must rediscover "the vocation of the baptised as a disciple of Jesus Christ and a missionary of the Gospel"***. So, as ***Pope Benedict XVI taught, "the parish is a beacon that radiates the light of the faith..... giving meaning and hope to the lives of individuals and families"***. Pope Francis also reminds us, "the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers". As well as the new experience of parish, ***we must consider the ministry of priests who are tasked with reading the signs of the times and being the most public face of an evangelising community.***

***Many parishes are no longer the primary social gathering place of their parishioners. We must enthusiastically look for new ways to form a community.*** Inspired by the Holy Spirit the Christian community must also have the courage to venture into diverse cultures. ***Whilst it is still defined as a geographical territory, the parish is increasingly seen as an existential space where people form relationships, serve one another and perform traditional observances. If the Parish merely performs repetitive actions that have no impact on people's concrete lives, if it has no missionary drive, it will be met with indifference.***

The new evangelisation reaches out to everyone in a personal way that they can understand. Nowadays, membership of the church is less about one's family history than it is about becoming part of a community where everyone works for the common good. The Parish community is the human setting for the evangelising work of the Church, the place where Sacraments are celebrated and charity is exercised.

***So, we need to find a way to renew traditional parish structures in the light of this mission, by finding new ways to understand and spread the Word of God. Celebration of Holy Mass is central to building up the Parish community, and we also need to rediscover Christian initiation [Baptism] as a lifelong journey.*** The Gospel is proclaimed by men and women who give credibility to what they say through the witness of their lives, and ***since evangelisation is closely linked to human relationships, a parish must bring people together and foster long-term personal relationships, thereby giving people a sense of belonging and being wanted. The Parish must be a refuge for the lonely and a sanctuary for the weary.***