



# THE YEAR GONE BY, THE YEAR TO COME

Coming to the end of another year in the ongoing life of our faith community, our Church, it is time to take a look back both at the broader life of the Church in the world, the universal Church, and at the life of our own parish. It is also, of course, a time to look forward with hope and optimism. The following is a brief reflection on these themes.

## ***The Church in the World—troubled times***

We have to be full of admiration for Pope Francis who, despite his advanced age, continues to have a phenomenal work rate on a daily basis as well as his very demanding travels abroad. He recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of this ordination. The six years of pontificate so have been a particularly difficult ones, with ongoing scandals tearing at its credibility and causing great hurt amongst to victims of abuse, but also to the faithful, who continue to struggle to keep the faith. At the same time, the Body of Christ often seems to be very divided from within, right up to the highest level, in a way that we have only even seen before in the most troubled moments of its two thousand year history. It is hardly the task of a parish newsletter



to analyse these painful matter, but they do need to be acknowledged as part of living the faith today. At the same time, it is surely the task of all parish communities to pray for the Church and its leadership, while bearing witness to the message of the Gospel in the way we live out our own lives, keeping faith with our God and being attentive to the most needy among us and in the world.

## ***Our Parish Community—a new vibrancy***

On a parish level, while we continue to have challenges, there is still much that is positive that we have to be grateful for. The rate of practice, while relatively low at about 13% of the local Catholic population, is higher than in many places and, perhaps most importantly, it has been stable over the past several years. Sunday masses continue to be reasonably well attended, while the 10am and 12.40pm weekdays masses have had an increased attendance, notably the later mass, which is attended by many people working in the area. This is a vital part of the parish's role in *servicing the city*, as people seek to live out their faith and bear witness in their busy daily lives. In many ways these two masses are the beating heart of St Mary's and we are very blessed to have them.

Two other groups that have also brought new life and dynamism and vibrancy to the parish are the *Croatian chaplaincy*, under Fr Josip Levaković, who is also a curate of the parish, and the *French Chaplaincy*, which has Sunday mass here twice a month at 12.30. And, of course we also have the *Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, which brings together about 50 people in the parish hall every week for the celebration of their liturgy. One of the distinctive features of all three of these groups is that they have a very strong community life. They also attract young people in a way that is somehow lacking in our traditional parish community, where, as in most parishes, the absence of young people is perhaps the one of the biggest pastoral challenges we face.

One of the highlights of the year was sure the opening in September of *our new Primary School, St Christopher's*, on Haddington Road. This comes after many difficulties. However, what we have is a wonderful school that is being enjoyed by both pupils and staff, as they bring together all qualities that made the old schools so special and look to the future with great hope and optimism

St Mary's  
Parish

Serving  
the  
Community

Serving  
the  
Family

Serving  
the  
City

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Child Protection: <http://www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie/ministries/child-protection/> also [www.csp.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.csp.dublindiocese.ie)

Streaming also at [www.churchservices.tv/haddingtonroad](http://www.churchservices.tv/haddingtonroad)

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## Challenges

Our *financial situation* remains precarious and our deficit has increased significantly during the past year. Our collections remain stable but these go to the diocese to be administered, as explained before the collections each Sunday. Where the problem arises is in meeting our own immediate needs as a parish: the various things we need for the liturgy (newsletter, hymn sheets, candles, wine, hosts etc), staff salaries, utilities, maintenance, insurance, all of which have to be met from our local resources, and these are very limited. Steps are being taken, however, to increase our income through the use of properties that have become available following the opening of the new school. It is hoped that this will go some way to redressing the present precarious position.

There is also a need for us to *revisit and revitalise our pastoral approach* as we face into a future that will be very different. It is easy for a certain sameness to creep in and for us to become fixed in our ways. While our liturgy is appreciated by those who visit us, we now struggle to find the people we need in the various ministries, people who will bring a new life and enthusiasm that in its turn will attract other people. Above all we need the engagement of young people and this should start with an attitude that is warm and welcoming. This is something we need to cultivate. There is a need for change in how we do things, after appropriate consultation, where all of these matters can be openly discussed. A *Parish Assembly* to look at these questions and others is a real need.

Amongst the other question will be the challenge the diocese has set us as we move to take over the *sacramental preparation in the parish* and move them away from the schools, as Archbishop Martin recently stated. This is both a challenge and an opportunity but one way or another it will require preparation and training.

Perhaps the most vibrant group in this parish is the *Friendship Club*, which now meets every Monday in the Parish Hall. This requires commitment from both the small team of people who organise it, as well as from its members who create a small community within the larger community and they have much to say to us all because of their commitment and enthusiasm.

Our parish has in fact grown over the past few years, with the addition of many new members, both in the two chaplaincies and because of the many people from other parts of the world who have come to live and have chosen St Mary's as their faith community. Let us look to these positives as we move in to 2020 and seek to build on them.

Our thanks to ALL who contribute so much during the year.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL**

## Hokusai Says – Roger Keyes

*Hokusai says Look carefully.  
He says pay attention, notice.  
He says keep looking, stay curious.  
He says there is no end to seeing.  
He says Look Forward to getting old.  
He says keep changing, you just get more who you really are.  
He says get stuck, accept it,  
repeat yourself as long as it's interesting.  
He says keep doing what you love.  
He says keep praying.  
He says every one of us is a child, every one of us is ancient,  
every one of us has a body.  
He says every one of us is frightened.  
He says every one of us has to find a way to live with fear.  
He says everything is alive –shells, buildings, people, fish,  
mountains, trees.  
Wood is alive.  
Water is alive.  
Everything has its own life.  
Everything lives inside us.  
He says live with the world inside you.  
He says it doesn't matter if you draw, or write books.  
It doesn't matter if you saw wood, or catch fish.  
It doesn't matter if you sit at home and stare at the ants on  
your veranda  
or the shadows of the trees and grasses in your garden.  
It matters that you care.  
It matters that you feel.  
It matters that you notice.  
It matters that life lives through you.  
Contentment is life living through you.  
Joy is life living through you.  
Satisfaction and strength is life living through you.  
Peace is life living through you.  
He says don't be afraid.  
Don't be afraid.  
Look, feel, let life take you by the hand.  
Let life live through you.*

## IN MEMORIAM

11am: John Gould, Anniversary

## Masses and Confession

**Sundays:** Vigil, 6pm (Saturday), 9.30am, 11am, 5pm  
Croatian Community Mass 6.30pm  
Messe en français 12.30 (2<sup>e</sup> et 4<sup>e</sup> dimanche du mois)  
Daily masses 10am and 12.40pm, Saturday 10am only  
-Rosary daily after 10am mass

**Adoration Blessed Sacrament, Weds 10.30-12.40**

## LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

N/A