



## As the Nights Draw In

This time of year brings mixed feelings. As the evenings draw in and the lights go on earlier, we can feel inclined to prepare to hibernate! On the other hand, a crisp, clear autumn day with the autumn colour and crunching through dry leaves is often enough to energise us again! It is also the time we think of harvest - gathering in - and storing things to use over the winter or keep safe for sowing or planting next year.

So how might this speak to us where we are as Partnerships? During *Forward Together in Hope*, we used the images of a seedling - a sapling - a fully-grown tree. After a year of working together, we will, hopefully, be beginning to see a few fruits appearing. They may be few and far between but, like a tree, it can take years before it comes to full fruitfulness. That also gives us hope! Even if we do not see a lot at the moment, it will come with patience and time.

Jesus often used gardening or horticultural images. He knew about pruning and maturing and the passing of the seasons. Sometimes, he spoke of urgency but, if we think about the story of the unfruitful fig tree, he does seem to advise patience and the application of TLC.

After a year in your Partnership, what are the fruits that you are beginning to see? Have a personal harvest festival giving thanks for what has been achieved. And then pray for the fruits to come - through the work of your hands and heart and mind - and through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

## Partnerships One Year On – A Time for Reflection

A year on from the establishment of Partnerships it was felt to be timely to provide every Partnership with the opportunity to review the year, celebrate what has been achieved and identify what additional guidance and support would be most useful. All 18 Partnerships completed the short review and the responses make for a very rich source of information about what is going well and what are the main challenges going forward. Thank you to everyone involved in what has proved to be a very fruitful exercise.

A group led by Fiona Standfield, Chief Operating Officer, has looked carefully at every response and has proposed a number of areas of support that will be offered to Partnerships over the months ahead. These have been considered by the Diocesan Board of Trustees, the Diocesan Implementation Group and the Bishop's Council and communicated to Partnership Chairs and Partnership Deans.

In addition, a document entitled '*Sharing Your Ideas*' has been produced as a compilation of the ideas and approaches that Partnerships offered in their responses. This is being made widely available across the Diocese to assist Partnerships in learning from one another.

It can be accessed on the Diocesan website at: [www.rcdhn.org.uk/partnerships/ptnpsharing.php](http://www.rcdhn.org.uk/partnerships/ptnpsharing.php)

At the Board meeting Bishop Séamus expressed his thanks for all that is already happening in our Partnerships and the hope that we can share and learn from one another.



# SHARING ACROSS

## Jesmond St Mary, a Community of Communities *by Julia Firbank*



Jesmond  
ST MARY  
Partnership

Litany for  
Jesmond St Mary  
Partnership

Holy Name of Jesus  
Have mercy on us

St Mary, Help of Christians  
Pray for us

St Mary of the Rosary  
Pray for us

Our Lady & St Vincent  
Pray for us

St Stephen  
Pray for us

St Lawrence  
Pray for us

St Alban  
Pray for us

St Aidan  
Pray for us

St Dominic  
Pray for us

St Anthony of Padua  
Pray for us

St Catherine  
Pray for us

St Teresa of the Infant Jesus  
Pray for us

St Mary of Jesmond  
Pray for us

Lord  
have mercy on us  
and bless our  
parishes, schools  
and partnership  
Amen

*In the first year of Partnerships, Julia Firbank (Partnership Chair) describes what has been happening in Jesmond St Mary.*

Based on the responses after our *Away Day*, our vision for our Partnership is for us to be a community of communities consisting of members whose discipleship has its source in the joy of the gospel and who:

- Share the peace and joy of Christ.
- Encourage others to a personal encounter with Him.
- Centre their lives in the spirituality, prayer and liturgy of the Church.
- Work together as equal partners in the mission to promote the Kingdom of God, responding positively to all who are in need and being ready to reach out to other communities of all faiths and none.
- Are welcoming and life giving to all.
- Respond to opportunities for personal and group formation.

... our Vision is to  
be a 'community  
of communities.'

Following this vision, we established working groups on Communications, Formation and Prayer and Spirituality and have started to look at how to support and build upon existing good practice in the areas of Young People and Outreach to Those in Need.

From the outset a Partnership Litany has been used at services and meetings and this is to be printed as a bookmark. A Local Network for Prayer & Spirituality has been established and an evening for First Communion Catechesis at St Mary's High School was held in July which was offered to other Partnerships.

There is 'A Come to the Well and Drink' course starting on 20 September at St Lawrence's, Byker for 6 weeks and 'A Liturgy of Mercy' will take place at St Teresa's Heaton on 17 March 2019.

We are planning to ensure that, as far as possible, Partnership events will take place in different parishes in turn. One of our concerns is to maintain the individuality of each community – as stated in our Vision, to be 'a community of communities.'

## Bringing People Together in Finchale Partnership *by Graham Donachie*

*Graham Donachie (Partnership Chair) explains how people have come together during the first year of their Partnership*

During our first year together as a Partnership, two major events have been organised to bring people together. The first was a Partnership afternoon at Ushaw, with the chance for a look around the college, activities for children and vespers in St. Cuthbert's chapel. The second was an open meeting at St. Leonard's school, to discuss priorities for our Partnership. From this meeting, we formed six sub-groups, giving people the chance to get involved in Building our Community, Outreach, Communications, Formation, Prayer and Spirituality and Young People.

Many of the young people in the Partnership are benefitting from the groups organised by Katie Flood, as part of the Youth Ministry for Durham Martyrs parish, and here are some of the other things we are planning for the next few months:

- An afternoon for those involved in our Parish Pastoral Councils, to meet each other and discuss how PPCs and the PDG can work together.
- An advent service, which will be jointly hosted by the Partnership and Ushaw College.
- A meeting of all those involved in Justice and Peace activities, so that we can share experiences and support each other.
- Social events, including a Partnership dinner.
- Open afternoons at each of our churches.



# THE DIOCESE...

## Ovingham Partnership – Looking Forward to the Future *by Kevin Thew*

*Ovingham's PDG Chair explains their Partnership logo, Mission Statement and prayer*

The Ovingham Partnership is named after a 14<sup>th</sup> century Augustine priory. Two stone carvings from this are now located in St Mary's church, providing a link to our heritage. One carving bears a ring of eight circles linked by arms to a central rosette of flower.

Our church names in the logo show our individuality as parishes as well as our common identity in the new Partnership. The maroon colour and the symbol in the centre echo the *Forward Together in Hope* logo and reflect our continuing journey.

One main aim of our Partnership is to continue to include the youth, as they

are intrinsic to the future life of the Church. School pupils within our parishes were offered the chance to give their ideas for prayers to show how we can move forward as one. Upon receiving some fantastic efforts, it was decided to choose parts from various prayers to create one that had a part of each school.

Our first mission statement was distributed to every parish and lots of good suggestions and feedback was received. As a group, we decided to take these ideas on board and provide another, using the ideas of all within the parish.

As a Partnership, we are proud of what we can achieve when we work

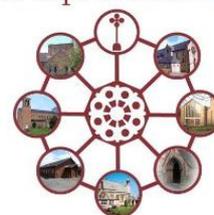
together and look forward to approaching any challenges as a team.



Our Lady and St. Cuthbert, Prudhoe • Our Lady of Lourdes, Chopwell  
Ss. Mary and Thomas Aquinas, Stella • St. Agnes, Crawcrook  
St. Anne, Winlaton • St. Joseph, Blaydon • St. Joseph, Highfield

### Mission Statement

A loving missionary community with Jesus at its heart, welcoming and valuing all as we celebrate our baptismal calling.



One Partnership • Seven Parishes • Unlimited Potential

## Monkwearmouth - Focussing on Formation *by Adrian Brookes*

*During the Monkwearmouth Partnerships first year, the Partnership Development Group (PDG) met regularly and is currently working towards completing a Development Plan for the Partnership. Their Chair, Adrian Brookes provides a summary of some of their progress made so far.*

### **Finance**

A Partnership Account has been created and a Finance Committee has been selected to oversee it. The PDG is currently assessing what the Partnership's financial priorities will be.

### **Communication**

Three Partnership Magazines have been released in the last year, one last Christmas, one at Easter and a Summer Edition. All have been very well received, and we have tried to showcase through them the vibrancy and diversity of activities and events that are occurring across Monkwearmouth. The next edition is due out in Advent. Also good progress has been made in developing a Partnership Website; we hope this will be ready before the New Year.

### **Formation**

Each of our eleven worshipping communities has been encouraged to organise a formation event over the next year. These monthly events will be held at a different church each month. The first three events include:

**4 October 2018** 7-8pm at St Joseph's, Sunderland - *Becoming Missionary Disciples*, led by Amy Cameron.

**8 November 2018**, 7-8pm, at Sacred Heart & St John Bosco on the theme of *Remembrance and the Holy Souls*.

**6 December 2018**, 6:30-7:30 at Immaculate Heart of Mary on the theme *Mary, Mother in Waiting*.

Also a Partnership Confirmation course is to be being organised. As a part of this, we are encouraging older young Catholics to help take an active role in leading it. There will be an evening of *Devotions and Sacred Music in Honour of Our Lady* with music by the Westland singers, at St Joseph's on 23 October, 7-8pm and a day retreat which is open to the whole Partnership is being organised for spring 2019.

### **Youth**

Alongside the initiatives that the Partnership Youth Development Group, led by Sr. Josepha, is undertaking, the Partnership is also planning to run a monthly youth event at St Joseph's. It is hoped transport for young people from the Partnership to both the *Source* and the *Event* will be provided.

### **Social and Pastoral Outreach**

The PDG Social Group is currently organising a Partnership Christmas Social, date and venue to be announced soon.

## How Can Partnerships Respond to *Laudato Si*? By Fr Chris Hughes (Head of the Department for Justice and Peace)

'Hearing the Cry of the Poor and the Earth' is the title of the Diocesan Policy for Social and Environmental Justice in response to Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si*. It can be found on the Justice and Peace home page under Social and Environmental Justice Policy heading on the Diocesan website at: [www.rcdhn.org.uk/social\\_concerns/justice\\_and\\_peace.php](http://www.rcdhn.org.uk/social_concerns/justice_and_peace.php). The policy acknowledges Pope Francis' challenge for an 'Integral Ecology' that responds to the needs of the poor and the terrible damage done to the environment. The policy has a number of practical actions that can be carried out on a communal and personal level. If your Partnership is looking for joint action to be taken in terms of social outreach, this policy may be a source of possible ideas.

Such actions suggested for communities range from collective prayer and worship, to carrying out works of mercy, raising and sharing funds, taking part in campaigns on a local, national or international level, encouraging all parishes in the Partnership to become



'Fair Trade' or 'Live Simply' parishes (CAFOD), co-operating within and beyond the Christian family on issues of shared concern. An example of the last of these actions has been students of St Thomas More's Academy in the Tynemouth Priory Partnership, who have taken an active part in a Commission to radically improve mental health services in the region.

What could your Partnership do?

## Partnership Conference Saturday, 15 September 2018 - Amy Cameron provides some feedback on the day

The Discipleship Conference was a really uplifting, positive gathering for anyone wishing to support their local Church. With every Partnership represented and over 160 people present, the day focused on practical information for Partnership development alongside inspiration, encouragement and joy. The feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive with every response indicating a wish for this kind of event to be repeated. Particular highlights of the day included the talk by David Wells which was described as "So relevant," "profound and to the point," "Passionate and down to earth" and "It gave great focus to the day and set the tone, it was amazing."

There were very moving liturgies led by Kathryn Turner with music by Maria Martindale and "thought-provoking, engaging, inspiring and very interactive" workshops that some "... appreciated the practical information on how to take the Partnership forward."

Much of the feedback focused on the brilliant venue of Sacred Heart Secondary school in Fenham, including the amazing lunch prepared by the Sacred Heart catering team. People enjoyed meeting each other and talking to people, particularly the young about their experiences. Overall, it was a day that challenged people and increased their knowledge, with "the breadth and variety and creativity of the day which was superb" and "a wealth of information to take back home." "I gained personal spiritual development that will assist me greatly in my Partnership chair role." "We definitely need more days like today." "I am Enlightened"



The items highlighted in the central pages feature some recent items from Partnerships around the Diocese. You can find these and items from other Partnerships on the Partnership Sharing page on the Diocesan website.

To contribute to the next edition due out in December or provide feedback, please contact Nancy Gash or Tony Sacco

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