



Renewal so far....

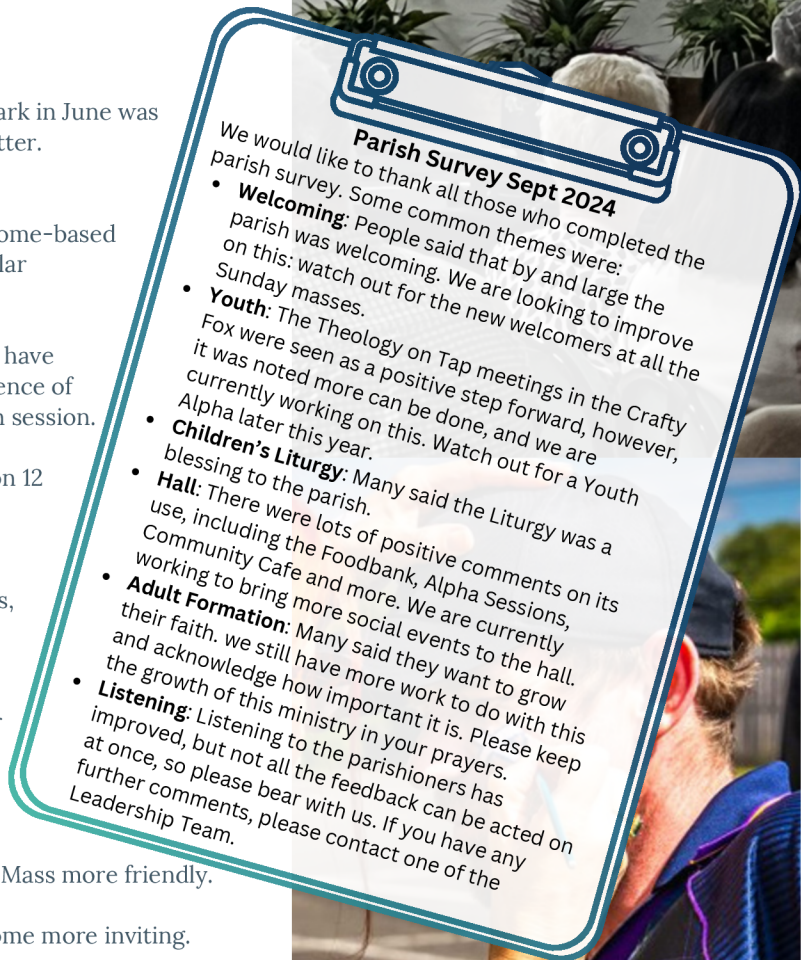
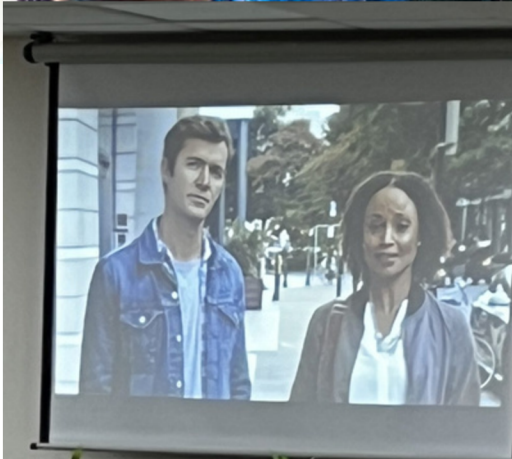
Our parish renewal programme has got off to a great start, and the first fruits of the mission are already in evidence.

- **Our first Alpha course:** Our launch event was the Alpha course in February, which resulted in an average of 65 people attending.
- **Parish leadership team:** A parish leadership Team of Helen Tiffney, Pat Connor and Susan Henderson has been set up to support Father Ivan and Father Colum to deliver the Renewal programme.
- **First Catholic parish summit.** In July, the Leadership Team accompanied Father Ivan to a three-day Divine Renovation Summit in Harrogate. More than 1,000 lay people from around the world attended the event, and the keynote speaker was the author of the book, 'Divine Renovation – Bringing Your Parish from Maintenance to Mission', Father James Mallon.
- **Our first parish renewal social event:** Our picnic in the car park in June was Designed to allow parishioners to get to know one another better. It was a great success, with more than 400 people attending.
- **New parish prayer groups:** As a result of Alpha, we have six home-based prayer groups where hosts have opened their homes for regular devotional prayer meetings.
- **Alpha Ambassadors:** Twelve of the original Alpha participants have agreed to become 'Alpha Ambassadors' – sharing their experience of the course with others, including at second Alpha information session.
- **Second Alpha course:** Our second Alpha course is launching on 12 September. If you are interested joining it, signup sheets are available in the porch or go to our website.
- **Visual screens:** to encourage greater participation in the Mass, we have installed two large screens on the altar.
- **Social Development Group:** A Social Development Group has been formed to look at events that will bring the parish closer together, as well as to entertain parishioners and deepen our faith. Look out for more details in the coming months.

Coming up...

- **Welcoming Group:** To help make the experience of attending Mass more friendly.
- **Porch updating:** To brighten up the entry and make the welcome more inviting.

Evangelisation Director: We hope to fill this role in the near future.



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

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Parish Renewal

FR. IVAN



Six months ago we launched our parish renewal programme, based on Fr James Mallon's book: 'Divine Renovation: Moving your Parish from Maintenance to Mission'. The aim is to build a parish that is more planned and proactive, but, more importantly, one that is missionary, proclaiming the Good News. When the diocesan Wellspring programme was launched, we emphasised that to grow the diocese, we need to utilize all those who come to faith - not just the 50 odd priests and 17 deacons.

This involves two distinct threads. Firstly, sorting out the parish structures to help us grow and support our mission. We have formed a leadership team of myself, Helen Tiffney, Pat Connor and Susan Henderson, who meet weekly, and this has been transformative. We have achieved in weeks what would have taken me months. We capitalized on the success of our first Alpha course to start groups for continuing Alpha, social development, welcoming, media and home prayer. We are developing a Finance and Infrastructure group, and a youth Alpha group, linking these into primary and secondary pupils as well as looking at how we prepare people for the sacraments and support them.

We have also refocused our pastoral Planning team to become more strategic, looking at where we want to be in 10 years and beyond.

Our second focus is renewal of our own faith, and how we work as a community. Alpha is a simple yet profound way of engaging people in their faith and giving them confidence to share that faith. We cannot be missionary unless the Lord is the source of our mission. Following from Alpha, we had a successful picnic in June, and we are starting small home prayer groups. In June, the leadership team attended the Catholic parish summit in Harrogate, where we learned what other parishes are doing to spread the Good News. I thank everyone for their efforts to date, and I hope and pray that more parishioners can join us as we continue striving to renovate our parish and move from maintenance to mission.



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Find us on Social Media



Catholic Parish Summmit

BY SUSAN HENDERSON



Father Ivan and the Leadership Team attended the 3-day Divine Renovation Catholic Parish Summit in Harrogate for ideas on what to do in our parish.

The summit was attended by parishes from around the world, 12 bishops, 200 priests and around 1000 lay people who all want to be part of transforming and evangelising their parishes. Key speaker Father James Mallon told us that Divine Renovation is a culture change for parishes who are stuck in a passive routine and aims to turn them into thriving missionary communities bringing others closer to God.

We heard about what worked in helping other parishes bring their lapsed and lukewarm family and friends back to Jesus and new people to the faith. It was wonderful to attend the 3 different Masses with everyone participating to their fullest. We were surrounded with those who have a passion for their faith, devotion to God and praised and thanked Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Many talked about the transformative effect that Alpha had which was interesting as our parish had just completed its first Alpha with 65 participants resulting in 6 new home prayer groups and 40 new volunteers.

There were general motivational sessions and 20 smaller sessions so we split up and attended different topics. We also chatted to people from other parishes about their journey and everyone shared thoughts and ideas. Adoration throughout the day allowed for quiet reflection and a wonderfully fulfilling and spiritual healing service centred around adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

We attended the summit looking for ideas and returned with so much more. We were inspired to step onto the missionary road with zeal, discovered fellowship with others on the same journey and felt the Holy Spirit close to us for the journey ahead.

We learned that a new vision is what's possible when God intervenes and there is no limit to what He can do when we pray, trust and are brave enough to follow Him.

Do you know someone who is thinking of becoming a Catholic?

Search for RCIA on www.saintjohnbaptist.org

"I can share the load. I don't need to have all the answers."

FR. DAVID BOYD
ST JOHN BOSCO
PARISH
ERSKIN



Our First Alpha Session

BY HELEN TIFFNEY



In February this year, Bishop Toal announced the launch of Wellspring, a new diocesan renewal project to energise the Catholic community and help transform us into a missionary church inspired by the Holy Spirit. The five priorities of the renewal are: liturgy, adult formation, youth formation, poverty relief and education.

At St John the Baptist, Father Ivan had already begun working on our own renewal programme. The basic principle is that if we are to spread God's word here in Uddingston, we can't just rely on Father Ivan, Father Colum and a small group of volunteers to do all the work. There is much to be done, and to achieve this, we need as many people as possible to share the burden.

This will result in many fruits: parishioners will be able to deepen their own faith, get to know one another better, and to then eventually take the good news out into the wider the community. A leadership team was formed to support Father Ivan and Father Colum, consisting of Helen Tiffney, Pat Connor and Susan Henderson.

Our inaugural event was the Alpha course, which was launched in February. The 11-week course attracted an average attendance of 65, and it was widely seen as a resounding success. The two-hour evening sessions involved a meal, a video on one aspect of the Christian faith, then groups of around eight people discussing the content. Our parishioners have a wide range of skills, and people were able to volunteer for activities such as catering, welcoming visitors, administration, and hosting and assisting the discussion groups.

The videos contained some extraordinary and moving testimonies of people whose lives had been transformed by their encounter with Christ, and the topics included: Is there more to life than this?; Who was Jesus?; Why did Jesus die?; How can I have faith?; Who is the Holy Spirit?; and How does God guide us? A highlight of the Alpha course was a weekend session where participants were urged to open themselves up the Holy Spirit and to say yes to whatever tasks they felt God was calling them to do.

Many of us do not have opportunities to discuss our faith, and the Alpha sessions enabled participants to have deep and personal discussions about their own Christianity. Strong bonds of friendship were formed, and six of the groups have vowed to keep in touch.

Our first Alpha course was an overwhelming success and has laid the groundwork for future courses. Feedback showed 100% of people enjoyed the social side of Alpha, 84% enjoyed the videos, 75% enjoyed the small group discussions, 68% enjoyed the food, and 68% said it led them to examine their faith more fully.

Alpha is a series of group conversations that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. Everyone's welcome. No matter your background or beliefs, you're invited.

