



I have no hands but yours

**St. Gerard's Parish
Pastoral Council Report
2007 – 2008**



ST GERARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL REPORT 2007 - 2008

This report sets out the highlights of the Parish Pastoral Council activities from June 2007 to May 2008 in line with the goals identified in the strategic plan which was drawn up by the Parish Pastoral Council in 2004.

The past year has been a challenging one for our Parish and your Pastoral Council. Everyone within the Parish is aware that we have been required to consider our Parish needs in this time of change. Your Pastoral Council has reflected upon its role and recognises that due to the nature of events over the past year we have not had the time to focus upon our pastoral role in full. As a result, we have not been in a position to meet all of the objectives as stated in our Strategic Plan for the years 2004 – 2007. Development of the Strategic Plan for the next three years has also been affected. At our recent Parish Meeting many suggestions were put forward and over the next month a draft Strategic Plan will be drawn up and ratified. The Pastoral Council's focus over the next three years will be to carry out the important Pastoral work identified in the revised plan.

The Pastoral Council was asked by the Provincial of the Redemptorist Congregation to consider the future pastoral needs of the Parish, and how these might be met within a new Community Centre. This exercise was undertaken in good faith and based upon the results, a draft plan for a new Community Centre has been proposed. This plan needs further development before presenting the proposals to the parish. We recognise that it is the prerogative of the Redemptorists to dispose of their assets and we have, in discussion with them, worked to minimise the effect of any such disposal upon the Pastoral life of the Parish. This has not been without its difficulties and tensions and while a considerable amount has been achieved it is our view that further work will be required as plans proceed. However the Pastoral Council feels that future involvement by the Parish should not be a matter solely for Pastoral Council but should also include representation from the wider Parish Family in order to allow the Parish Pastoral Council to concentrate on its core role of assisting the parish priest in relation to the pastoral needs of the parish.

In reviewing our activity over the past year it is the case that the above has diverted us from our principal task of addressing each of the areas of our Strategic Plan.

With regards to Youth, we have as a parish, not been able to sustain our Youth programme, including our Youth Mass, G.I.F.T. Children's Liturgy and Youth

Music Group. It has not been possible for Pastoral Council to move these vital areas forward despite considerable time and effort over the past year. We urgently request the assistance of willing volunteers to re-establish our programme for youth. With regards to Parish Family the main focus has been to identify from the various Parish Groups what their requirements would be now and in future in respect of the planning of a new Community Centre. Pastoral Council has also continued to look at ways of improving and developing the Parish website and this will remain a focus to ensure that we respond proactively to the demands of new technologies. In Outreach our activities have centred on visiting other parishes to look at how their Community Centres functioned to meet Parish needs. This has proved a very positive activity and it is hoped that the best ideas will be used to shape future developments for our Parish accommodation.

The Third World Group continues to thrive and their last event raised over £3,000 for the displaced Badajo people of the Philippines and their Fair-Trade stall continues on a monthly basis.

Liturgy remains very important and in the past year we have established a new rota for Ministers of the Liturgy with a training/practice programme for both new and established readers.

Practical Issues have mainly been taken up with matters relating to the redevelopment of Parish facilities as previously mentioned at the start of this report.

The Parish Pastoral Council is your representative body and as such cannot function without your support and input. Its role is consultative rather than directive. In order for it to be successful in future years it needs to be truly representative of our Parish Family. Four new members will be required and we would be grateful if you would consider putting your name forward for election at our forthcoming Parish Meeting on June 10th.

Thank-you for your continued support and we ask for your prayers to help us with the important and often challenging role with which we are charged.

Parish Meeting

A Parish meeting to review this report is scheduled for Tuesday 10th June 2008 commencing at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre.

Current membership of the Parish Pastoral Council is:

Fr John McAlinden, Fr Brian McGrath, Fr Patsy Cunning. Gerry Coghlan, Adrian Doherty, Paula Donaghy, Una Donnelly, Odey Fox, Rosemary Gallagher, Margaret Lamb, Paul Linden, Olivia Marley, Rose Mary Murray, Patricia McBride, John McCann, Pat McCausland, Liam McLaughlin, Ita McVeigh, Laura Teer and Mildred Weiniger.