

# *What makes a Missionary Parish?*

The Diocese of Salford has produced a list of characteristics which would be found in a parish which had embraced the vision of Pope Francis to be a genuinely Missionary parish. We too are consecrated as a community in the service of the Lord, and within the community of faith with the Successor of Peter. We seek to follow the teaching given to us by Pope Francis: A missionary parish is a community called to be open to the Holy Spirit so that the Good News of Jesus Christ can be known to all through welcome, engagement and outreach:

## *Welcome*

- Creating a place of joyful welcome and belonging, accessible to all
- Building an active and inclusive Parish Leadership/Enabling Team
- Safeguarding all parishioners through implementation of proper procedures
- Meeting the needs of children and young people
- Encouraging participation in parish activities
- Keeping all parish buildings in good repair
- Providing a prayerful ambience through church decoration and cleaning

## *Engagement*

- Celebrating well-planned and prayerful liturgies
- Providing opportunities for prayer and devotion outside of Mass
- Forming people for liturgical and catechetical ministries
- Catechising for Baptism and other Sacraments □ Engaging with schools and colleges within the parish
- Training in discipleship, including adult formation, RCIA and opportunities for growing in our Christian faith
- Preparing engaged couples for marriage and supporting those who are married
- Educating parishioners in the social teachings of the Church
- Overseeing parish finances with transparency
- Maintaining good collaboration across all parish activities

## Outreach

- Communicating well through newsletters, websites and social media
- Serving the particular needs of the local community
- Creating social outreach groups open to all
- Linking with Caritas, CAFOD, SVP and similar organisations
- Caring for the local environment Inviting participation in activities such as parish missions or Alpha courses
- Reaching out to parishioners who do not regularly attend church
- Participating in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and action

A missionary parish will have a focus on Evangelisation: deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ and inviting others to get to know him and the Gospel message. The lists above are not in priority order and not exhaustive. However, this makes a good starting point. Please note that not all the activities on the list are “front-line” evangelisation, but none-the-less are equally important. It might be a worthwhile exercise for each person to use it as a sort of ‘check-list’, to see which of these each is engaged in. It may well be that in going through this list, you recognise that there is something you would like to be doing or could do that you are not engaged in at present.

Pope Francis has declared the coming month of October to be a special month of prayer and action to strengthen and grow God’s mission through the Church. It is a time to encourage us all to reflect on and pray for the Church’s mission, and for the whole Church to fully realise that in our rapidly changing world the Gospel is needed now more than ever!

As we prepare to engage with the *Extraordinary Month of Mission*, in October of this year as a small, rural parish, we can give thanks for all who are actively engaged in the missionary work of the parish, and pray not just that we will continue in this, but that this *essential* work of evangelisation will grow and bear much fruit.

**“Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News.”**