

St John XXIII at St. Nicolas de Flue Parish Administrative Council

PAC Report for 2018-19

This report covers the activities of the Parish Administrative Council (PAC) as provided for under Article 13 of the 2012 Statutes of the Association of Saint John XXIII. During the period under review, six meetings were held, as well as regular informal consultations with our colleagues from the parish office and parishioners in order to facilitate the overall administration of the parish.

While it's always going to be difficult to follow up on last year's visit from His Holiness himself, 2018-19 has not been without its momentous occasions! We welcomed the Archbishop of Manila Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle to our Parish, along with the Bishop of Takoradi, the Most Rev John Bonaventure Kwofie, who was appointed as the new Archbishop of Accra shortly after his visit.

However, there have also been some streamlining processes put in motion as well. There are elections for the positions of President Vice President, Property Management along with a new mandate due in the responsibility of Child Protection, and the appointment of the Vicariate liaison . Whoever gets appointed to these posts, however, we can be sure that they'll lead the Parish with the same diligence, passion and love that has characterised it in the past year.

Introduction

Despite some seismic shifts in the Catholic church , our community has stuck together and flourished more than ever. There are 1375 active households currently registered in the parish, and while 23 families notified us of their departure, this was more than made up for by the arrival of a staggering 93 new families! At present, we estimate an associated membership of 4100, made up of the exact same number of nationalities as last year, 103!

Fr Paul continued to # have fantastic support in his vocation thanks to the legion of other churchmen kind enough come to our parish on occasion. These include Mgrs. Bob Vitillo and Francis Obiora, Fr. Lawrence, Fr. Kevin Fr. Cajetan Cuddy Fr. Gabreil Chibira, Fr. Pako G. Rantutu, Fr. Dennis OP, Fr. Hendrick Mantu, Fr. Rafal Sobierszuk, Fr. Côme Traore, Fr. Gabriel Ishaya , Fr. Kevin and Fr. Blessed. We wish to thank each and every one of them, and we pray that they continue to provide us with spiritual guidance anytime they visit the parish.

In general, we are pleased to report a successful year. One which brought its own struggles and hurdles, but thanks to a concerted team effort in the spirit of Christian unity, we have gotten through stronger than ever. We look forward to meeting the challenges of the year to come by stewarding our spiritual, economic and human resources with hope and prayer.

Accomplishments

Over the course of six successfully convened meetings of the PAC, our dedicated team of professional councillors elected to administer the affairs of the parish, established and participated in working groups to manage particular HR and procurement matters. Through their collective efforts the PAC strengthened the procedures of transparency in the governance of the parish administration, and accomplished something we've been striving for since moving to Montbrillant, bought our Parish debt below [CHF1 Million \(2019\)](#) from an original CHF 4.5 [M.](#)

Progress has also been made regarding our **property management**. Our related upkeep costs dropped by about 7%, and our parish house fire alarm panel documentation and signage has been updated and checked. The move of the Swiss analog telephone system to a nationwide Internet Protocol (IP) system has also updated our phone system.

As for our **financial performance**, the Parish is in a better **financial** position overall compared to year 2017 with a surplus of about CHF34,527 (before consideration of accounting estimate – amortisation of church premises of CHF727,705). Income/contributions increased by 4%. This was mainly due to: 9% increase in weekly offertory collections; 14% increase in the proceeds from Kermesse and other fund-raising events; and increase of 20% in funds for ministries from parishioners.

The Parish is also on track with its financial commitments including repayment of the loans. In addition to the scheduled payments to service the parish loans, held by the Vicariate and the Mission Interior, the parish paid an additional [sum](#) to further reduce the loan balance, which reached CHF [1M1-million](#) at the end of December 2018.

Over the past year, we realized that our **Fundraising** canvasses were **more or less ceaseless!** So we decided to hold our Lighten the Load III pledge marathon next year. We are grateful to all parishioners for their gift of generosity.

We're also continuing our commitment to our **Child Protection/Safeguarding** initiatives by coordinating with RE coordinators and youth ministers, along with ensuring the disclosure forms of the registered catechist volunteers are up-to-date. We have also organised two Child Protection and Safety workshops for catechists and confirmation classes volunteers this year, and assisted with one workshop organized by Couples for Christ, a lay group based in the parish. This was to prepare to host a youth conference in Leysin on the 8th of June.

Coming to **Vicariate Liaison**, our parish has conformed to the schedule of Sunday collections as required by the Diocese. We have contributed to 23 different charitable works of the Catholic Church at diocesan, Swiss, international, and pontifical levels. In addition to the scheduled payments to

service the parish loans, held by the Vicariate and the Mission Interior, the parish paid an additional CHF 90'000.

Because of the financial implications of our renovation project, we have been freed from the obligation to make further financial contributions to the diocese, at the present time. However, we have received continuing support from the Diocese and the Vicariate. Bishop Charles Morerod, Episcopal Vicar Pascal Desthieux, and the Vicariate staff have been especially helpful in a range of practical and pastoral matters.

With respect to managing our **Human Resources**, we have continued optimising our parish staff contracts, salaries, and team composition as the needs of the parish continues to evolve. There have been a number of changes over the past year. Edith retired as the office Receptionist after many years of service. Marlene resigned from her position in charge of parish Publications, and in 2018, Sarah resigned as the assistant to the Youth RE programme, with the efforts to find her replacement still ongoing. The parish cleaning services have also been streamlined to align with Swiss law. Jason Cultivo has assisted us in assigning cleaners in different parts of the parish house, apartment and the church.

Another important development has been the optimization of the religious education program. Since Emily resigned to take up a position with the vicariate, a single position has been created to ensure close integration between the two religious education streams. This new position, the Director of Religious Education, will lead both the Youth and Catechism programmes in due course. This position was advertised at the beginning of May and closed on 31st May with a small number of candidates applying. The recruitment process is ongoing and we shall have completed the recruitment in the near future to ensure a smooth transition in these programmes.

By **communicating** with the parish internally, many of the tasks at hand with the parish rejuvenation were completed by parishioners. For example, a parishioner with a technical background was trained to execute the required fire drills of our catechism classes. We intend to make more connections like this with our increased presence online and on Social media.

Challenges

Our **parish office** has pushed to adopt a new culture of fundraising and stewardship in order to arrive at a zero deficit and self-sustaining financial position. We have also drawn further from the very rich and diverse human capital in our parish community to contribute their individual experiences to support the collective work of the church.

The work our counsellors, staff and volunteers have been doing is something very special indeed. If anything, the challenge is not to motivate them, but to get them to maintain their excellent standards going forward.

Property management threw up its fair share of challenges as well. As part of our change of system, we had to move away from our former practise of hiring occasional or part-time work, sometimes even resorting to cash payment for cleaners and day labours. We also had to update our phone system over the past year, as part of the SwissCom "ALL IP" initiative which has been on-going since 2013.

Targets for 2018/19

As we look to the future, our **PAC** has one clear goal in mind for 2019. To ensure a smooth handover to the next administrators [PAC President](#), from our current team. [President Michael Wilson](#).

The targets for our **Property management**, on the other hand, are numerous! The more work we do on our property, the more work reveals itself. So one of our goals is to simply maintain, steward and keep our workspaces as best we can over the longer term. This also includes maintaining what's inside them, so renewing our furniture is also a vital target for the year to come. Along with acquiring a safe to protect the parish assets.

After our stellar efforts in getting our debt from over [CHF4.5M4 million](#) to under [CHF1M-million](#), our aim for our **financial performance** is to further reduce our loan amount balance this year and launch a new GIF campaign [and reduce the debt burden by a further 20%](#). We must also continue to be prudent in our expenses to ensure we stay within budget for the rest of the year.

Our website was updated to reflect the new **Child Protection** Charter against sexual abuse established by the Diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg on 1st January 2019. This requires all people who are serving the diocese to present a criminal record extract, along with a special extract, to accompany the Declaration Forms and three-yearly Child Protection workshop attendance mandatory for all parishioners working with children and young people. The St John 23rd Parish Policy on safeguarding children and young people which underwent revision in 2016 also remains valid and is due for review in June 2020.

Looking into 2019, the goals are clear for our **Vicariate liaison**. First, to renegotiate the holiday for contributions to the vicariate. Following that, we must continue our productive liaisons with Pascal Desthieux, the rest of the Geneva vicariate, and the larger diocese. Finally, we must also prepare a report for the use of the MI funds on the church building.

[We must evaluate current **communications** strategies and work to improve them. The PAC working group will conclude its task of setting up an outdoor café from Easter to October with the dual function of fostering](#)

communications and community as well as fundraising. A project on documenting the history of our community is also under way.

The accounting estimate and amortisation of improvements made to church premises was also changed based on a revised estimate of the useful life of these improvements. This resulted in an adjustment of CHF680,246 to this year's financial statements.

We must evaluate current **communications** strategies and work to improve them. The PAC working group will conclude its task of setting up an outdoor café from Easter to October with the dual function of fostering communications and community as well as fundraising. A project on documenting the history of our community is also under way.

Commented [mw1]: Please update and make it current with our discussion on communications

Formatted: Font color: Auto

Formatted: Font color: Auto

2018-19 has been a year to remember for our parish. In restructuring our administration structure, there has been a seismic dramatic shift in our workforce, our monetary output and our governing body, with elections of 4 PAC members facing towards us later this in the year. These changes have not come easy, and we have lost some faithful co-workers along the way. However, we have also paid back three quarters of our total debt, revolutionised how we work on our property, and made several large strides towards a totally self-sufficient financial structure. Put simply, our great struggles have led to great successes, and are testament to the power of Christian unity in the face of uncertain times. God bless you all.