

ST JOHN XXIII, GENEVA,
PAC PRESIDENT – PRESENTATION AT THE 2020 AGA

WELCOME

I welcome you all to this year's AGA. In line with our mission as the English-speaking Roman Catholic parish of St John XXIII, who come together to share our gifts as a community of diverse nations and cultures:

- Celebrate and live our faith through prayer and the Sacraments and service to others;
- Teach and proclaim the good news of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ;
- Reach out in solidarity with all people of goodwill to promote Truth, Justice and Peace.

You are **attending this year's AGA by virtue of being members** of our associations according to "*Article 4 – Members*" of our statutes.

For our new parishioners, I would like to introduce what our PAC (Parish Administrative Council) is. "*The PAC is responsible for the Parish's day-to-day Administration and Finances, the Parish Office Staff, Grounds and Maintenance, and Legal issues regarding the Canton and Diocese.*"

Note on the delay of this year's AGA:

This year's AGA was delayed. The delay was occasioned by the special lockdown from COVID-19 pandemic.

"Article 8 – Convening of the General Assembly 1. The General Assembly shall be convened by the Parish Administrative Council at least once a year, no later than 30 June."

CONVENING THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This year's AGA has been properly convened.

*"Article 8 – subsection 3. A **General Assembly shall be deemed to be properly convened** if the members are notified of the agenda, date and venue thereof at least fifteen days in advance."*

The **2019 accounts & budgets were made available** in the Parish Office and [online](#).(Statutes Art 8. Sec 5). as required by our statute.

We have 1 open position in the PAC. *Article 16 – Elections and Terms of Office,* and will elect one person from amongst our members to fill this position.

THIS YEAR'S SPECIAL GUIDANCE – TO MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING

We are holding this year's AGA in the main church building as it affords us enough space to maintain social distancing between ourselves as per COVID-19 guidance from the Geneva authorities.

THANKSGIVING TO NOTE TO VARIOUS PERSONS & ORGANISATIONS

Special thanks **to our Cure Moderateur, our Parish Priest Fr. Paul Friel**, who has continued to serve our parish diligently during this unique period when the parish activities were closed and then partially opened.

Special thanks to **our PPC, Office Staff, lay persons who have volunteered for various assignments in our parish, our various ministry members, religious education team, our choir and to you our members**. For the spiritual and material support for our parish and its members.

Special thanks to all those who have **assisted with online masses** during the lockdown period. Led by Stephen Smith, Petra Lindner and assisted by Lito Benitez, Annie Yuson and others who participated in the various online masses, all the online masses were led by Fr. Paul. Whom we are all grateful to.

Special thanks to those who assisted in **preparing the church for opening and designing the social distant sitting arrangements**, led by Leonard Greer and other volunteers.

Special thanks to those **volunteers who diligently sanitise (disinfect) our church** after each mass and after every event.

Special thanks to **assisting priests at various masses and religious events**.

Special thanks to **our Lord for healing Fr. Paul from a COVID-19** infection, and keeping us healthy to be able to attend today's AGA.

Personal note of thanks: for your support and prayers when I lost my mother in December 2019. I received a lot of well wishes, prayers and support from parishioners. The PAC changed its monthly meeting to accommodate me.

Special thanks to **our volunteer Auditor, Berryl**, who carried out a thorough audit of our 2019 financial accounts.

SPECIAL THOUGHTS TO ALL THOSE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY COVID-19

- Especially those who lost loved ones.
- Those who's jobs and income were impacted by COVID-19.
- We join in thanksgiving, all those who were healed from COVID-19 infections. Including our own Fr. Paul (mentioned above).

2019 – 2020 EVENTS

COVID-19 occasioned **unprecedented changes in our time**. We resorted to online masses and received spiritual support remotely.

We are **grateful for the opening of the lockdown** and the ability to attend masses in person, whilst maintaining social distancing.

COVID-10 Loan: We applied and obtained a loan of CHF 78,000 from the Geneva Canton to support our parish during the COVID-19 pandemic, that resulted in reduced collections. As a parish, we still had to maintain our fixed expenses that includes staff salaries and utilities. We obtained the loan under the conditions allowed in our statutes, *“Article 18 – Prior Opinion of the Bishop”*

Fr. Paul and the PPC will **update on pastoral delays and changes** occasioned by COVID-19. *Mainly affecting the calendar of our sacraments and religious formation.*

2020 – 2021 VISION & TO DO LIST

This new year, we will have special emphasis on resuming **fundraising activities** to support our parish and various charities and outreach activities. I would like to mention, in particular, the pledge campaign and special appeals for funds. Our **2020 annual fundraiser, “Kermese”** has been delayed to later on this year due to the effects of COVID-19. This event is usually scheduled for May or June of every year.

We need to complete **updating of our parish policies and procedures**, especially those affecting:

- Safe Guarding (formerly child protection), this work has already been done by Celeste Maria who is leaving the PAC.
- Financial policies and procedures especially around procurement.
- Staff job descriptions.

We look forward to **maintaining our parish as a welcome centre for spiritual direction and masses**.

We will continue to **support Fr. Paul to enable him to effectively carry out all his pastoral work**.

We will continue to **motivate our Parish Staff to enable them effectively carry out their work in the parish**.

We will continue to **support our religious formation volunteers**, by providing the facilities they require to continue with their religious formation and religious support work.

PARISH ASSISTANCE PROVIDED DURING COVID-19

Food donations and assistance were provided by the **Philipino community** and directly by **Fr. Paul**, who continues to assist those adversely affected and require food assistance. **Our parishioners also assist in soup kitchens.**

Note that the Canton of Geneva also has COVID-19 assistance programs and food banks. We would like to encourage parishioners to utilize this first if and when in need, as they are properly manned and adequately catered for to support those living in Geneva and affected by the effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

FUND RAISING APPEAL

To cover the **shortfall in collections and pledges.** I appeal for your support and consideration. Please register for our pledges campaign. Details are available online in the Parish website.

Please note that we have **new additions for giving that includes electronic and online means of giving:** specifically, “Laquette”, TWINT, Paypal (still under investigation as it’s expensive and needed special administration). Details will be included in our parish website whenever anything new forms of giving is introduced.

SOME CHANGES & UPDATES

- Social distancing sitting arrangements during masses.
- Need to wear masks.
- **Collection baskets are not to be passed around, these will be placed at various locations in the church. Please place your collections in them.**

REDUCTIONS IN OUTREACH CHARITABLE GIVINGS

We have had to reduce the level of support we give for our outreach charitable givings to support various projects in developing countries. The main reason is reduced collections because of COVID-19 pandemic. We also **reduced amounts given to our sister Parish Turkana in Kenya by 25%.** We will review this once we resume a higher level of collections.

PARISH FINANCES

The PAC in March 2020, prepared a **revised budget to enable us cope with the effects of COVID-19 pandemic,** that may negatively affect our parish ability to meet its financial commitments.

The parish’ management of finances during COVID-19 have borne fruit and I’d wish to thank **our Parish Treasurer, Augustine Agyman, for leading this**

effort and the vigilance and support of our Parish Priest Fr.Paul who has even taken on to perform tasks that we normally pay for. Special thanks to the PAC and parish staff for their support in implementing the required changes.

SAFE GUARDING COORDINATOR

I'd like to mention some important 2020 Update especially as it affects our children and young parishioners:

- The St John 23rd Parish Policy on safeguarding children and young people which underwent revision in 2016 and validated in 2018, was slightly updated to reflect the new [Charter against sexual abuse \(French\)](#) established by the [Diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg](#) on 1st January 2019 and the corresponding new requirements, updated the resources section and revised wording to reflect the new Director of Religious Education. **The next policy review is due in June 2022.** (specific changes to note: items 6, 9b, 9c, 12 until 15.)
- The Parish began to take on the requirement for all **people working with children and young people to present a criminal record extract and a special extract, in addition to the Declaration Forms and three-yearly Child Protection workshop attendance** that is currently required by the Parish for all.

NOTE: VARIOUS UPDATES FROM THE MINISTRIES AND PAC COORDINATORS HAVE BEEN POSTED ON THE PARISH WEBSITE

CLOSING REMARKS:

THANK YOU, OSCAR MBECHÉ, PAC PRESIDENT, 26 JULY 2020

Useful References from our Parish Statutes I HAVE used in PAC President presentation

* Article 2 – Aims 1. In communion with the Bishop of the diocese, the aims of the Association shall be: a. To assist the pastoral bodies in maintaining and developing the life of the community, in the light of the Gospel, in compliance with the decrees and instructions of the Bishop and in observance of canon law; b. To acquire the necessary financial means for undertaking the pastoral work defined by the pastoral bodies; c. To manage and maintain its assets; d. To maintain and develop solidarity with the Roman Catholic Church of Geneva (ECR) and other institutions of the Church.

** (The statutes adopted in 2005 by the Diocese of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg established a new structure for all parishes. Unité"Pastorale"/"Pastoral"Unit (UP). Our Parish Pastoral Team is composed of

our Parish Priest and lay persons. (minimum 2;maximum5), who ensure that the priorities identified by the Parish Pastoral Council conform with the pastoral guidelines of the Unite Pastorale.

*** Article 4 – Members 1. The members of the Association shall be: a. Any person belonging to the Roman Catholic faith, i. residing in the canton of Geneva or in the surrounding border regions, ii. able to communicate in English iii. at least 16 years of age, iv. whose membership has been registered in the Parish registry. b. The Pastor, c. The representative of the Parish designated by the pastoral team.

**** Article 7 – Competence 1. The General Assembly shall be the highest authority of the Association.

**** Article 8 – Convening of the General Assembly 1. The General Assembly shall be convened by the Parish Administrative Council at least once a year, no later than 30 June, in particular to approve the accounts and the budget and conduct statutory elections. 3. A General Assembly shall be deemed to be properly convened if the members are notified of the agenda, date and venue thereof at least fifteen days in advance, not counting the day of the Assembly, by means of announcements made at the church services and via notices placed on the parish premises, in the Church or in the parish media.

***** Article 10 – Presidency 1. The President or Vice President of the Association shall preside over the General Assembly.

***** Article 13 - Reports 1. The General Assembly shall hear and discuss the reports of: a. The Parish Administrative Council, b. The treasurer, c. The auditor, d. The Parish Pastoral Council,
2. These written reports shall be attached to the Minutes.

***** Article 16 – Elections and Terms of Office

1. The General Assembly shall elect for a three-year term renewable two times: a. The President of the Association, b. The Vice President, and c. The other members of the Parish Administrative Council as provided for in Article 20.1.e.

***** Article 18 – Prior Opinion 1. The Parish Administrative Council must obtain the prior opinion of the Bishop or his representative before the General Assembly takes any decision to: a. Contract any loan, take out any mortgage or issue any bond;

***** Article 24 – Day-to-Day Management 1. The Parish Administrative Council shall make all property acquisitions that are provided for in the budget or come within the area of day-to-day management.

***** Article 33 – Auditor 1. Each year the General Assembly shall appoint at least one auditor having the necessary competence. He shall be appointed from outside the various councils.