

## Summary of the talk on Divine Renovation at the Parish Annual General Meeting, Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2018

At the Parish AGM on Sunday April 22<sup>nd</sup> we were very privileged to welcome Hannah Vaughan-Spruce from the organisation *Divine Renovation* to talk to us. Hannah explained that *Divine Renovation* is based on the experiences of St Benedict Parish in Halifax, Nova Scotia and their priest, Fr James Mallon, and described in his book (see below). Its purpose is, in keeping with the urgings of a succession of Popes, and our own Bishop Richard, to help parishes to focus outwardly and develop their evangelizing and missionary vocation. She presented startlingly depressing statistics showing how our Church is in decline and voiced the current view of many, including Pope Francis, that things will continue to deteriorate if we continue doing things the way we have always done them.

Hannah described central features of the *Divine Renovation* process. These included 3 key principles ((1) the absolute primacy of evangelization (2) best leadership principles (3) experience of the Holy Spirit); and the Game Plan strategy used by St Benedict Parish “to form disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus Christ” (creating a culture of an “invitational church” which invites people to events or activities they will enjoy and which will nourish them spiritually, including Alpha, the Alpha Team, Connect Groups, Discipleship Groups, Ministry and Worship). Hannah explained that this is not a template to be imposed identically on parishes, but a set of principles which can guide the development of individual parishes according to their unique situations. In our Parish this would mean Fr Paul and a team working on a Vision of what we want Worth Parish to be like in 10 years’ time, and developing a “road map” and strategy for achieving this.

In the UK, *Divine Renovation* is currently helping 5 Parishes become more missionary, and this involves coaching, online resources, and national events. Hannah’s talk was fascinating, inspiring, and full of hope for us about what can be achieved by doing things differently. Exciting times can lie ahead!

Do read the book by Fr James Mallon *Divine Renovation – From a Maintenance to a Mission Parish*, and visit the websites [www.divinerenovationuk.org](http://www.divinerenovationuk.org) and [www.youtube.com/watch?v=C18V0128-2U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C18V0128-2U) (*Our thanks to Josie Davies for the above article*).