

# **Minutes of Extraordinary Joint Pastoral Committee Meeting**

## **Monday 18th October 2021, 7:30pm**

### **OLR Parish Centre**

**Present:** Fr Kevin Dring, Fr Tristan Cranfield, Nick Woodall (Chair), Nick Price, Marylou Cockshoot, Cheryl Wood, Pauline Crundwell, David Beglan, Geraldine Briggs, Mary Sheppard, Mary Oakshott, Peter Oakshott, Bernadette Shell, Estela Simkins, Tojo Mathew, Helen French, Judith Barnes, Lynda Mills, Halina Dominik

**1) Fr Kevin opened the meeting with a prayer** from The Book of a Thousand Prayers by Angela Ashwin

**2) Welcome & Introduction (NW).** Apologies received: Agnieszka Pawlak, Bernie Hellett, GregFolwell, John Purcell, Fr Bruno. (It was noted that Terry Swales has stepped down from the St Agnes committee)

**3) Brief overview of how the pastoral committees have traditionally worked and the main concerns / actions of recent times.**

Nick Price (Chair of St Gregory's Pastoral Committee): Meeting every 3 months. Supporting the priests and encouraging return to the church and catechism. Stewarding and keeping the community together. Keeping the church clean.

Marylou Cockshoot (Acting Chair of St Agnes Pastoral Committee): Meeting every 3 months. Maintaining the church and kitchen. Community events. Catechism.

Nick Woodall (Chair of OLR Pastoral Committee): Meeting 3 times per year. Supporting the priests. Addressing concerns of parishioners. Filling in the gaps and being flexible.

**4) Fr Kevin's Introductory comments with some concrete proposals for action and identifying pastoral priorities**

Fr Kevin thanked everyone for what they were doing already.

Reference made to recent email from Divine Renovation: what are the two most important questions for every parish to consider :

i) What do you need to do differently?

- Belonging
- Raising up leadership
- Ministry

ii) What do you need to let go of?

- Fear
- Anything that is not Mission-Focussed

The importance of Holistic care – **everything** in the parish is pastoral.

The importance of having a "vision", with a Mission Statement, and the importance of avoiding a "parochial" view.

We are encouraged to follow the lead of Pope Francis by reading the “signs of the times”.

Role of the Priest:

We should be living “in tune” with each other, and empowering everyone, with the Priests acting as the conductors, so that everyone can flourish. By 2030, there will only be 25 Priests for the Diocese! The laity must take on a more executive role.

Pope Francis encourages us to own the “kerygma” (the essence of the Gospel).

Fr Kevin’s draft Parish Vision Statement was then read out by Cheryl Wood. Fr Kevin felt it needed more input, with the help of a small prayerful subcommittee, acknowledging that such a statement can’t be drawn-up as a Parish.

The importance of Good Communication was stressed and also the importance of doing “everything for a reason” – not just because “we’ve always done this”. All that we do must serve a purpose and it’s all about people, especially those who need us

The churches must be welcoming and inviting – turn and say hello to someone you don’t know.

There must be concrete actions for development and these should be initiatives that affect the whole parish (not just those receiving the Sacraments).

Parish Family Groups (discussed in the last joint pastoral committee meeting in 2020) – we must revisit this.

Engaging with the “Synod Path” over Advent will be important – emails from Bishop Richard to follow (in preparation for the Bishops’ meeting with the Holy Father in early 2023). See the Bishop’s Pastoral Letter for 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.

700 people attend Mass each weekend (200 less than before COVID) – we need to engage with them.

Key messages:

- mission statement
- engaging more deeply with service

## **5) Responses to Fr Kevin’s comments**

*Individuals made the following observations:*

- The joint pastoral committee forum seems more useful than the individual groups.
- There is a need for formation for adults.
- The pastoral committees should have an executive role to free-up the priests.
- The Welcome is important and must be genuine.
- Social gatherings are very important.
- Music is important.
- Good communication is very important.
- Welcoming new parishioners is of particular importance.
- 15 minutes discussing a topic after Mass?
- The elderly were disenfranchised during the COVID lockdowns.
- There is still an important role for the individual pastoral teams.

- The new style newsletter message perhaps too brief?
- IT courses for those who cannot yet use livestream?
- It is important to be sensitive to those who do not yet feel ready to get involved.
- The Welcome and Mission Statement is very important in **every** language.
- Serving people is serving God; all the communities should be encouraged to get involved.

#### **6) A Parish pastoral plan?**

Fr K proposed the following:

1. Divide committee into a reflective group to address the mission statement and vision (eg 2 people from each church, including Chairs), for presentation of the mission statement during Advent in 6 weeks' time – 1 good meeting needed – date agreed for Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 7pm.
2. Remaining committee members to take care of the fabric of the churches.
3. Engage with the Synod Path during Advent.

#### **7) Any Other Business**

Nick Price thanked the priests for their renewed efforts in welcoming the parishioners.

**8) Date of next joint pastoral committee meeting:** Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 7pm.

#### **9) Fr Tristan closed in prayer.**

The meeting ended at 21:18, with apologies from the Chair for overrunning.

Nick Woodall 20/10/21