

**Joint Pastoral Committee Meeting
Monday 7th February 2022, 7:00pm
OLR Parish Centre**

Those present: Fr Kevin Dring, Fr Bruno Witchalls, Marylou Cockshoot, Estela Simkins, John Purcell, Agnieszka Pawlak, Judith Barnes, Cheryl Wood, Greg Folwell, Nick Price, David Beglan, Peter Oakshott, Mary Oakshott. Nick Woodall(Chair)

Apologies: Tojo Mathew

Fr Bruno opened in prayer at 19:00

Reading of the minutes from the last meeting was waived without objection.

Fr K provided a document summarising what has been achieved so far:

- Sacramental programme – 100 First Holy Communion candidates
- 6 RCIA participants
- 18 members of Lumen Christi teenage Confirmation group
- Good attendances at Mass.
- Baptisms, marriages, new parishioners.
- Good morale and a desire to make progress.
- Divine Renovation initiatives for parish renewal.
- Alpha course beginning next month.
- We are down to 2 priests and it will remain so.
- Emergence from COVID.
- Synod process.
- Diocesan pastoral plan looking to 2030.

Looking ahead:

LENT - starts March 2nd, during which a Parish Prayer will be composed, linking-in with a Parish Mission Statement.

EASTER SUNDAY - 17th April

Aim to present to the Parish the completed Parish Prayer linking in with the Mission Statement. It is the intention that we pray the prayer throughout the 50 days of Eastertide.

PENTECOST - 5th June

Taking a Parish Census – “Who are we?” “Who is here?” “How am I willing to play a part?”

Proper resource is important in the context of fewer priests. A revised Mass schedule is needed to ensure that, if one priest is away (for whatever reason), all the Sunday morning Masses can be covered by a single priest. Hence the following revised times are proposed: 9 am at St Gregory’s, 10:15am at OLR, 11:30am St Agnes.

Fr Kevin also proposed enlisting a paid individual to support the various programmes and initiatives within the parish, working to September.

Responses from other attendees:

- David: very sensible changes
- Nick W: supports time changes
- Nick P and Greg F were not concerned by the start time at St Gregory's being 15 minutes earlier.
- David: advertised times on the board would need to be changed.
- Nick P enquired about weekday masses at St Gregs or St Agnes. Fr Kevin responded that this could be considered, but OLR had the advantage of being central in town.
- Cheryl enquired about pressure on priests in the context of the new Sunday morning Mass times. Fr Kevin reiterated that the scenario where one priest would celebrate all 3 Sunday morning Masses would only be in emergencies; in normal circumstances it would be shared out between the two priests.
- Marylou felt having a paid role is a really good idea.

The group then turned to the Synod document summarising the feedback from the recent meeting of 30 parishioners:

Cheryl: Recalled that the meeting of parishioners had been positive. A lot of overlap in the topics: Ministry; adult formation; how to reach the young. Linking in with other Christian communities. Inclusiveness.

Mary: Observed that the age profile was 60/70 plus. Not many young people or those from the Polish/Filipino/Kerala/Portuguese communities.

Judith: Suggested putting the same questions asked of the parishioners to the First Holy Communion and Lumen Christi participants.

Marylou: There is a wealth of Christian agencies in Eastbourne, volunteering within the community but also outside of the community; can we join forces with them? Important to ensure that women who are already involved are listened to and respected. Outreach for the young is very important.

Fr Bruno: creating a poster to distil what voluntary Christian agencies provide what services – Marylou will look at taking this forward.

Nick P: Congregation size at St Gregory's is not yet back to pre-COVID numbers. Consider visiting those who have not returned? Fr Kevin felt this was a very positive/concrete suggestion. Judith suggested a "school gate" approach. Fr Kevin felt it might be difficult to identify individuals in this context.

Greg highlighted the large drop-off in attendance after First Holy Communion. How should we remind families of their obligation?

Cheryl: There should be an expectation of parental involvement in Sacramental preparation for their children.

Marylou: A disconnect has seemingly developed over the pandemic for those who used to attend; they are making use of the livestream instead of attending in person. We need to pray about this.

Nick P: Will livestream continue? Fr Kevin: Yes. We are here for the people; they need access.

Nick W: We should be feeding the hungry and clothing the poor. We could ask parishioners for donations of clean clothing to hand out to the homeless. We could run a soup kitchen.

Greg: St Gregs is in residential area. Invite non-attending local residents to come in on certain days?

Cheryl: Social activities need to restart.

Nick W. closed in prayer after reading an extract from the Gospel for the previous Sunday.

Date of next meeting to be announced, but Fr Kevin expressed a desire that the Vision/Mission subcommittee meet to help finalise the Parish Prayer and Mission Statement before Easter – date to be announced.

The meeting closed at 20:07.