

Parish Forum meeting

Thursday 12th June 2008, 8:00 p.m.

The second Parish Forum meeting was opened by Tim McHugh who said that the meeting would follow the same format as before.

Father John pointed out that the Parish Forum was not only a working forum, but should also be used to reflect on our faith. Father John would choose a Scripture reading for each meeting.

A passage from the Scriptures was then read out, followed by a brief discussion in groups and a prayer.

Tim McHugh outlined the items that had been raised for the agenda of the meeting:

- (1) update from the Justice and Peace group;
- (2) update from the Readers and Ministers group;
- (3) children's liturgy;
- (4) timing of the Saturday evening Mass;
- (5) Parish directory;
- (6) icon behind the high altar;
- (7) celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the consecration of the Church.

(1) Alicia Holliday reported on the activities and events organised by the J&P group, including the children's quiz. The issue of the Fair Trade stall was discussed and it was agreed that running the stall at all Masses over a weekend was too much for one person. Although alternative sources for Fair Trade goods are increasingly available, the stall serves as a focus. The J&P group would try to make arrangements and perhaps use the organ loft for storage. It was also mentioned that attendance had been dwindling at the tea/coffee after the 10.30 Mass. It was agreed that it should be mentioned in the newsletter and that the informal rota of volunteers should be revitalised. Also, it could be used as a good opportunity to welcome newcomers to the Parish.

(2) Charles Utley presented an update on the Readers and Ministers group. The group needs more volunteers, particularly at Masses other than the 10.30 Sunday Mass. Charles suggested that the group should have a meeting and perhaps invite a priest to talk about the spiritual side of ministry.

There have been some problems with readers/ministers not turning up for their allocated Masses. Charles said he would be happy to coordinate the readers' rota, so that people could notify him if they are unable to attend. A new list of readers/ministers should be printed off, with Charles's details as a contact person.

Father John also mentioned that perhaps the special ministers would like to help bring the Holy Communion to housebound parishioners and this could be explored.

(3) The children's liturgy was then discussed. There are 2 groups, one for younger and one for older children. The younger group is managed by Richard Barraclough and two others and this seems to be working well. More volunteers are needed for the older group, particularly with Rosemary Rallison wishing to step down.

It was pointed out that the younger group was mainly for children up to the age of 5 and the older group for children up to the First Holy Communion. Older children are encouraged to remain at Mass.

It was agreed that a note should be put in the newsletter and/or on the notice board to remind parents of this. Father John emphasised that the children's liturgy was important also because it brought children from different schools (35 at last count) together and made them feel part of the Parish community.

The drawings produced by the children are put up on the board in the Church hall each week. Michael Howe will be selecting some of the drawings and putting them in a folder to reflect the Church year.

(4) Joanne Jacobs had brought up the subject of the Saturday evening Mass to Father John's attention before the meeting. It was proposed that 7 p.m. was too late for younger children to attend and also for families to share their Saturday evening. The proposal was to change the time to 6 p.m.

A different view was expressed that Saturday afternoons were busy with sport activities etc. and 6 p.m. might be too rushed for many people.

An associated suggestion was made that perhaps once a month the young people of the Parish (aged 13-16) should be invited specifically to the 6 p.m. Mass, possibly followed by a social meeting in the Hall. Care should be taken however not to exclude those 'regulars' who attend the Saturday evening mass.

Father John's impression was that there was a lot of support for moving the Mass to 6 p.m. and felt that the right time to do this would be at the end of the British summer time.

The issue of confession timing was also discussed, namely whether it ought to be moved to 5.30 p.m. or even closer to the beginning of the Mass. This requires a little consideration.

(4) Michael Jones reported on the progress in the updating/recreation of the Parish Directory. Michael had managed to locate the old directory and contacted the people responsible for various groups. It was then discussed what information should be included in the new directory. It was agreed that there was no need to include items such as a list of Catholic schools or the times of Masses at other churches, as this information could be put up on the notice board instead.

The directory should, however, contain the names, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the contact persons for the various groups. Father John would put in a note in the newsletter that the directory is being compiled.

(5) At the previous Forum meeting Fr John had introduced the suggestion that the curtain above the High Altar be replaced, possibly with an icon. This idea was revisited.

Father John reported on the presentation on icons by Sister Petra Clare, which took place on 7th June. The presentation, in the form of a slide show followed by a discussion, was very interesting and well-attended. Father John stated that of the images presented, the image of Triumphant Christ would seem particularly relevant to our Parish, as it depicted Christ on a throne, surrounded by angels and the four Evangelists.

Father John said that since many people felt strongly about the cross currently situated above the altar, it would be possible to have it re-sited, perhaps in a brass support on the altar.

It was pointed out that the issue was a rather sensitive one, as it would need to be ensured that the icon would fit in and enhance the appearance of the Church. In discussion it was noted that the space had been designed for an image. An estimate of the cost was several thousand pounds and the finance committee will be approached about this.

It was suggested that Sister Petra Clare might be able to do a mock-up image to make it easier for the parishioners to imagine what the actual icon would be like. Another idea was to enlarge a postcard-size image of the icon and possibly project it onto the space behind the altar.

Father John said that in order for Sister Petra Clare to be able to complete the icon for the Feast of Christ The King in 2009, a decision would need to be made by the next Parish Forum meeting.

(6) There was a proposal that the celebrations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the consecration of the Church should start with a concelebrated Mass on Thursday 25 September 2008. Priests formerly associated with the Parish would need to be notified to put the date in their diary. The Mass will be followed by a short celebration in the Hall.

Father John suggested that perhaps the various Parish groups could organise a series of events to mark the anniversary.

Next meeting: September/early October