

## Parish Forum Meeting: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2009

The meeting was opened by Father John who introduced a reading from the 'Dogmatic constitution on the Church' (Vatican II), this was followed by reflection and discussion by the group.

Tim McHugh took the Chair for the meeting.

1. Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed issues not addressed in the agenda were discussed:
  - Parish directory – all 400 copies have been distributed and it was agreed that a further print run should be made. All agreed that this is a very useful document.
  - Michael Jones now acts as MC at the 10.30 mass and undertakes some training. The demeanour of the servers has improved and senior servers have agreed to assist as MC in Michael's absence.  
Fr John is going to arrange medals for the Guild of St Stephen and in the autumn Michael will arrange a rota and occasional training sessions.
  - Anointing of the sick – this is proposed for September and Fr John will liaise with SVP to organise this.
  
2. Icon. Final approval has been received from the Diocese with some minor adjustments to the image. Sr Petra Clare has asked for a template of the space to be prepared so she can draft an outline 'sketch'. Nicola Hicks volunteered to co-ordinate this.
  
3. Finance. Margaret Pedder gave an overview of the Parish finances (summary sheets were circulated). Currently Parish income is slightly more than expenses and we have substantial reserves. However, we need to be cautious of major expenses (see item 5).  
With this in mind there was a discussion about means to raise funds for the Parish, it was suggested that organisation of events may be changed slightly to focus more on fund raising as well as the social life of the Parish.  
There was discussion about the Parish Gift Aid Scheme, which is successful in bring in funds (for every pound donated 28p is reimbursed from the Inland Revenue) but only 85 parishioners subscribe to this scheme (about half of the eligible households). It was proposed that a recruitment drive should be undertaken in autumn. It was noted that in comparison with the old fashion 'planned giving' scheme, Gift Aid is:
  - Anonymous
  - Not fixed, you can vary giving each week
  - Easy to set up
  
4. Health & Safety. Paul Mason and Fr John are in discussions with a company offering expertise in this area. We will need to identify and train Fire Marshalls to be available at the busy events (eg First Holy

Communion). It is likely that Special Ministers and Readers will be approached to volunteer as these are available at each mass.

5. Heating. Nicola Hicks outlined the concerns and needs for the heating systems in the Church and the Presbytery. The systems are old and failing and there is a question of the safety of the Presbytery system. Preliminary quotations for this work are in the order of £30,000, although Nicola felt that these could be refined and reduced. There was general agreement that the work should be done as a priority and that it should be done properly as it would be a false economy to try and cut costs. Nicola agreed to prepare a specification for detailed quotations and discuss with the companies that had given provisional costs.
6. Young Parishioners Mass and fund raising. It was noted that following the success of the regular youth masses, some of the young parishioners are keen to run some fund raising events. They will be invited to talk to the next forum meeting.
7. Reports from Church Groups:
  - Eucharistic Ministers – there is a need for more Ministers to help with distribution of the Eucharist to the sick and housebound. Some volunteers have come forward but more are needed.
  - Justice and Peace Group – a Peruvian week is planned for 10/11 October, this will include:
    - Games evening for Children
    - Meal and Speaker
    - Cake & folk art sale
  - Secular Carmelites – Fr John reported that the Christ the King group have been approved by the Archbishop as a foundation (approval from Rome is next). The Secular Carmelites meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month.
  - Relics of St Therese of Lisieux – the relics will be visiting London around 15<sup>th</sup> October, please see the Newsletter for information.
8. AOB
  - Alex Martin raised a question about music at mass, particularly at masses other than the 10.30. He proposed that we are losing touch with some of the traditional hymns which are particularly resonant and powerful. This also applies to the traditional sung mass parts.

There was considerable discussion and it was agreed that whilst the Choir led by Lindsay Barraclough is exceptional and much appreciated there were two issues:

- I. People with musical talent should be encouraged to contribute to masses, perhaps with the understanding that they are not committing to the same time service every week.
  - II. To try and re-introduce some of the traditional hymns it is proposed that we have a ballot to identify the top 10, then they could be included in services.
- Fr John was happy to announce that the new Vicar at St Lukes is interested in discussing joint activities. To be discussed at the next forum meeting.
  - Fr John informed the Forum that he had been invited to become the National team Priest for 'Marriage encounter', after discussion with the Diocese he had agreed to take up this responsibility.
  - A local artist had approached Fr John suggesting that she runs a Parish art group. One possibility agreed on was to extend an open invitation to one session in the Autumn and then assess how much interest results from this.

Fr John closed the meeting with an prayer and a blessing.

The next meeting will be in September / October 2009.