

Chaired by Nigel Anstead – Also present Fr Pius Duke - Notes by Barbara Kay - 28 parishioners present

Sister Dympna opened in prayer.

Social Committee

- a) Monthly Drop In Centre – this has been suspended by Bedford Borough Council for the moment.
 - b) Golden Friendship Club will meet again this Thursday, 6th January.
 - c) Afternoon Vintage Tea – next date Friday 28th January.
 - d) Christmas Fayre on 4th December 2022 had raised between £1700 - £1800, more than in 2019. There are still a few raffle prizes left, which will be recycled if not claimed in the next two weeks.
- No fundraising events are planned for this term. An 'ad hoc' committee will be formed if anyone would like to organise an event. Rosemarie suggested a celebration of St Patrick's Day in March.

First Holy Communion – Barbara reported all going well with the two parallel classes, to restart next Sunday 9th January. Prayer Partner forms are now being distributed; Barbara requested new volunteers.

Pope Francis – Synodal Church – Sr Dympna reminded us that the parish level discussions need to have taken place by the beginning of February. Dates and times need to be set up for these meetings. It was suggested that the Patrick Donegan room was a suitable venue for a small discussion group. The times identified were Tuesday 11 am and Wednesday 2 pm to fit round existing use of the Patrick Donegan room. It was suggested that an evening meeting be held for those who work during the day, but no day or time was identified. The meeting times will be emailed to those on the mailing list and published in the newsletter. There had been no volunteers as yet to act as 'listeners' and note-takers. As Fr Nicholas's weekly message is not being produced at the moment, it was suggested that the back of the newsletter be used for updates on Synodal Church.

Catholic Grandparents

It was suggested that future meetings be held in the Patrick Donegan room rather than the Parish Room.

Second Collections and CAFOD

There had been a discussion via email about how second collections might be organised and Jon Foster had drawn up a list of what has been done in previous years. The January collections will be for SPUC (8th/9th January) and Pax Christi (15th/16th January). A Missio priest will celebrate the Masses on 22nd/23rd January but no collection will be taken. Rachel as CAFOD rep drew our attention once again to the severe plight of the people of Afghanistan. It was agreed to hold a second collection for this on 5th/6th February. There will also be the usual Family Fast Day appeal in Lent. Nigel emphasized the importance of planning ahead for second collections.

Altar Servers

Trisha expressed concern from an infection point of view about the servers from the Latin Mass and those from the English Mass using the same cassocks within a short space of time on a Sunday. She thought that ideally the Latin Mass servers should have their own cassocks. Barbara reported that the adult servers do have them. Trisha agreed that on receipt of the names and sizes of the boys from the Latin Mass who use the parish cassocks, she will label them with their names and put them to one side for their exclusive use. Barbara agreed to speak to Marguerita about this.

Curtain Behind Altar

Fr Pius was consulted about when the curtain behind the altar needed to be changed back to green. He said that the Christmas season finishes with the Baptism of the Lord (this year on 9th January) so the curtain will need to be changed on the 10th. He highlighted that the Latin Mass calendar does not always correspond with the English Mass one. Barbara reported that the tabernacle cover was changed accordingly before the Latin Masses and changed back afterwards.

Collection

Since the last parish meeting, Martin Kay and Trisha have between them created collection bags on poles. These have proved beneficial both from a 'non-touch' point of view and a security one, as money is no longer left lying around in an open basket by the door. In the coming week Martin will fit rings on the wall behind the repository to store the bags safely. Martin and Trisha were thanked for their work on these.

Christmas Masses

Nigel reported that all had gone well. 140 people had attended the 5 pm Mass on Christmas Eve, but with extra seating, everyone had fitted in.

Nigel felt that special thanks should be given to the cleaners, and Rachel felt that the flower displays had been “thoughtful and professional”. Trisha reported that she had seen Teresa Lovell and Teresa Davies spending most of the day on Christmas Eve arranging the flowers. It was agreed that Chris as chair of the Finance Committee should write a special letter of thanks to both Teresa and Teresa, and that they, and everyone else who had made the Christmas Masses possible, should be thanked once again in the newsletter.

SVP

Ursula reported that 30 hampers had been distributed to deserving families this year, the goods being donated by St Thomas More Sixth Form, All Nations Church in Brickhill and a local company.

Giving Tree

This was very successful once again, with all the labels being taken and gifts brought back for distribution.

Finance

Chris reported that the church maintenance programme was being carried out regularly as it has been over the past year. Two current issues had been identified:

- a) A leak in the hall roof which is being investigated.
- b) Three of the drains by the church are blocked and will need to be cleared.

Chris explained the aim was to have maintenance work done to a good standard, but at the same time keeping costs down.

Chris outlined the general financial situation in the parish. As income has been reduced during the pandemic, and has been exceeded by expenditure, it has been necessary to use reserves to pay for maintenance. Although there is no immediate cause for concern, this situation cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely. The picture is the same in all parishes and the Diocese will shortly be having a ‘push’ to encourage us to increase our regular giving. Chris was asked how much it costs overall to run our parish each week and he estimated in the region of £1000.

Minibus

Nigel reported on the situation with the minibus. Up until July this year while it was not being used, insurance was reduced to Third Party, Fire and Theft. However, from July onwards, fully comprehensive insurance restarted. The minibus is not hired out, but rather contributions to running costs are invited from users as a service to the community. Running costs over the past year have been £723 and contributions to these have amounted to £620 (including £150 from Holy Cross for the use of the minibus for a Youth 2000 weekend in York), giving a deficit of £103. Nigel expressed his thanks to Dom’s Garage, who gave us the minibus initially and who service, maintain and MOT it free of charge. He asked if Chris would thank Dom’s Garage in writing; Chris thought that this had been done in the last 4 – 5 months, but would check.

Microphone and amplifier

These had recently proved faulty and will need to be replaced. We will seek advice for someone in the parish with expertise in this area before purchasing.

Parking

Nigel had noted that, after the issue was resolved a while ago, once again cars are being parked on the verges outside the church. This can lead to a parking fine from Bedford Borough Council. He pointed out that if the car park is full, additional parking is available in the layby opposite the church and at the John Bunyan Centre. Barbara will ask Jon to put a reminder about this in the newsletter.

Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

Myriam informed us that National Lottery Funding is available to arrange a community celebration of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022. It was reported that Tom Devine has undertaken the procuring of such funding in the past. It was suggested that a party open to the whole community be arranged, probably out of doors, similar to that in 2012. As an alternative, or in addition, Rosemarie suggested that trees could be planted in the church grounds.

Fr Pius closed in prayer.

Date of next meeting

6th February 2022.