

Parish Gathering – Sunday 12th June 2022

Chaired by Sue Anstead – Also present Fr Nicholas Nwanzi, Brian Emmanuel (speaker)

Notes by Rachel Kirkham - 20 parishioners present

Fr Nicholas opened in prayer.

Guest speaker

Fr Nicholas introduced Brian Emmanuel from the Northampton Diocese (see below)

Confirmation

Katherine reported that 16 candidates from the parish are being confirmed at 7 pm on 5th July and requested prayer for them. Preparations are well in hand for the service. There will be a bring and share reception afterwards, to which all parishioners are invited. Jon Foster is printing certificates.

Latin Mass

The congregation is growing, with lots of young families. A professional singer has been attending to train the choir in Gregorian Chant. Sung Masses have finished for the summer now and will start again in September. Sung Mass goes on slightly longer than usual.

Masses will be held on two Holy Days of Obligation in June: Thursday 16th and Wednesday 29th.

6 children made their First Holy Communion at the 8.30 Mass this morning.

Members of the Latin Mass congregation have also started a branch of the Scouts of Europe, an organisation affiliated with the Church.

First Holy Communion

Hilary reported on the parish First Holy Communion Masses. The children had behaved well. She felt that the church was overcrowded with 55 candidates over three Sundays.

Going forward, she thought that we need to do more to support the Catholic parents, as the onus for preparing the children for Communion is with them.

Hilary would also like to be more involved with the FHC programme and she, Barbara and Fr Nicholas will liaise about this. She would like more involvement from children in the Mass and hopes to start a children's choir at the 10.30.

She suggesting involving the children in the Offertory procession and will talk to Emma and Suzy about this.

Gospel procession

During one of the First Holy Communion masses Emma Nidfor and her family arranged 2 processions – one to bring up the bible and 1 for the offertory. This has been very well received and Emma has been asked to arrange with Father Nicholas to repeat this at least every 3 months.

Cadets of Our Lady

Suzy reported that it was proving hard to get going with this again after COVID. An organization called Church Youth Activity links young people with the church and gives them opportunities to get involved. She would like to see a Green theme, perhaps with a logo.

Suzy also called for ideas on how to help children stay connected with the church after they have made their First Holy Communion.

Welcoming Groups

John Smith said we should have welcoming groups to get to know people at all Masses. Possibly also involving the parish youth.

Finance

Christine advised us that the Annual Accounts are ready and will be available at the next parish meeting.

Curtain Behind Altar

Trisha asked Fr Nicholas if the gold curtain could be left up until after the Feast of Corpus Christi (19th June) and then changed. This was agreed.

Social Committee

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration on 2nd June had been a great success; we were thanked by several members of the local community. Although it was free, we have made a surplus of £274.61 – mostly thanks to the GFC Tombola and the raffle. We received £500 from the Mayor's Fund to cover the entertainment. All helpers were thanked.

The Vintage Tea and Golden Friendship Club will continue throughout the summer.

Drop-In Centre - _ will hopefully restart again in September.

We are planning a Barn Dance on Saturday 1st October.

Minibus

This is booked twice a month with donations for fuel. Will cover costs over the year. More drivers from the parish are needed. Grandparents group trip to Walsingham on Sunday 24th July for World Grandparents Day.

Any other business

Myriam had raised £30 for the church from the refreshments after the 10.30am mass.

Diocesan Fundraising

Brian Emmanuel thanked Fr Nicholas for his warm welcome. He told the meeting that he works for Northampton Diocese, supporting parishes in finding an approach for grants and funding.

He explained that the Diocese is currently not in a good financial position with problems raising funds. Some churches are successful, others less so.

He felt that parishes needed to talk to one another and help each other in the light of falling numbers and therefore falling offerings. Parishioners need support in how to donate. Youth need to be more involved. Singing could be a unifying factor – suggestions to Hilary.

Brian offered his help to parishes in sourcing money for areas that need help. A coordinated approach is needed.

Various points were raised in connection with fundraising:

- Fr Nicholas reported repairs needed at the presbytery. Brian Emmanuel will look into this.
- Rosemarie commented that the size of the Bedford Deanery made it difficult to share ideas.
- Hall is managed by Praetorium, a business who manage a number of halls in the diocese and use contract cleaners.
- Nigel and one other person are responsible for locking up the hall.

Date of next meeting

Sunday 3rd July after 10.30am Mass.

Fr Nicholas closed in prayer.