

Parish Gathering – Sunday 3rd July 2022

Chaired by Chris Brookes

Notes by Barbara Kay

Fr Nicholas had given his apologies as he was unwell.

Chris opened in prayer.

Social Committee

Sue reported that the Vintage Tea and Golden Friendship Club will continue throughout the summer, otherwise nothing is planned. The Drop-In Centre is to start from Thursday 1st September and every 1st Thursday thereafter. Sue explained the nature of this: it is organised by a "social prescriber" from the NHS Primary Care Network, based in London Road Health Centre, who invites in organisations such as BPHA, Citizens' Advice Bureau, etc, and Christ the King simply hosts the event. This was felt to be an important outreach initiative and Rosemarie asked how well it is advertised: it appears in Beds Life magazine. A Barn Dance is planned for Saturday 1st October.

Minibus

The minibus was used on two occasions in June, for a trip to a craft fair at Birmingham and to collect Fr Patrick Hutton's family from Heathrow airport. Two trips are planned for July, the Grandparents' pilgrimage to Walsingham on 24th July and a pilgrimage to St Julian of Norwich shrine on 26th July. There are still seats available for both trips. The minibus passed its MOT recently.

First Holy Communion

About 8 children who received First Holy Communion this year are continuing to attend Mass regularly. Hilary has arranged for this year's First Holy Communion children to come back in their Communion clothes to the 10.30 am Mass on Sunday 10th July. All the families had been contacted and some of the parents had responded positively. Hilary hopes to involve the children at the 10.30 am Mass through asking them to be welcomers, to read the Bidding Prayers, to be involved with the offertory procession and to sing in a choir, for which she had already purchased the hymn books used in the Catholic schools with which the children will be familiar. Hilary will work with Emma and Suzy on getting the children involved.

31 children have already signed up for this year's First Holy Communion programme. Mass attendance will be monitored and Jon Foster has produced an attendance card to which stickers will be added. Families will be encouraged to attend Mass together rather than just dropping children off for class at 10.00 and picking them up at 11.30.

Confirmation

16 candidates from the parish are being confirmed by Bishop David at 7 pm on 5th July. There will be a bring and share reception afterwards, to which all parishioners are invited. Sue is organising the drinks and Katherine is organising the food.

Cadets of Our Lady

Suzy pointed out a new notice board at the back of the church which Michael Mangan had put up. On it there will be the Cadets' activities, rotas etc.

Rachel asked Suzy to publicise when fruit and vegetables grown in the church grounds were available.

Second Collections

There will be one collection this month for the Apostolate of the Sea, to provide chaplains at ports to support seafarers in what can be a lonely life.

Church calendar

Nothing to report.

Altar Servers and Curtain Behind Altar

Trisha asked any servers at the 6 pm Mass replace the vestments where they find them.

The curtain had recently been changed to green with the help of Kevin. He, Nigel and Trisha do the curtain changing four or five times a year between them. More offers of help with this are needed and it will be added to the list of jobs on the volunteers' sheet.

Safeguarding

Dale Bunting-Gray is working through the list to update the DRB forms for those parishioners who need them. The checks need to be done every three years. Teresa reported it was difficult to make contact with Dale and it was suggested she arrange a specific meeting with him. Chris will e-mail his contact details to her.

Flowers

The meeting asked that Teresa Lovell be thanked for the work she does on this.

Church cleaning

The situation will be discussed with Katherine and carried forward to the next meeting.

Gardening

Barbara reported that a member of the Kerala community had offered his services and that Martin would make contact and arrange to meet him at church to discuss how he could help. Rachel commented that the beds under the church windows are in need of attention.

Rosemarie proposed that Martin be offered petrol money for the many trips he makes to church. Barbara commented that he would welcome this in the light of rising fuel costs. It was suggested that Martin approach Fr Nicholas about this.

Finance

Chris briefly presented the church accounts, stating that we just lived within our means last year and have added slightly to our funds this year. Parishioners had been asked to increase their giving by 20% and some had responded, for which they were thanked. Both income and expenditure are not back to pre-COVID levels. Inflation and rising energy costs are having an impact and prudence is needed.

Chris drew attention to the increase in giving by the Latin Mass congregation from £8,061.05 in the year ending 31/03/21 to £14,214.29 in the year ending 31/03/22. Barbara undertook to pass on the parish's thanks for this. Chris also pointed out that the gross hall rents had increased in the same period from £3,887.50 to £15,138.50 due to the proactivity of Praetorium, the company which now manages the hall. Liz enquired as to the arrangement with Praetorium and it is through a commission rather than a contract. They charge an extra £5/hour for the hall rent over and above what the church receives and which represents their profit. Chris is happy with the way they are running the hall. Charges are reviewed regularly with Marguerita and increased in line with inflation.

Chris explained what the Diocesan Levy is, and how it is to increase from 20% of income to 37% this year. He reported that Northampton Diocese is one of the most efficient dioceses in the use of their funds and how this increase in levy is an alternative to raising funds by selling off church buildings.

Chris pointed out a patch of damp over the stage which had been investigated recently. It had proved not to be a leaking roof as was feared, but condensation resulting from a plastic lining, and that nothing need to be done.

A new and improved sound system will be fitted in the church over the coming months, funded largely by a donation from the Legion of Mary from a bequest they received.

Those involved in finance were thanked: Christine Allen who deals with our accounts, those who count and bank the collection, and Justin Bozzino who is the Gift Aid organiser.

Teresa asked if she could find out how much she had given via the collection and she was directed towards Christine. It was felt inappropriate to publish the amounts of individual giving. It was reported that standing orders accounted for around £400 per month of giving and these went straight to the Diocese, so did not appear in the parish accounts.

SVP

Ursula reported that SVP meetings continued to take place via Zoom. Contact with those the SVP helps is by phone, doorstep visits and more recently inside visits.

Sr Dympna has contact with the Wixams Retirement Village, whose Catholic residents remain keen to have a weekday Mass there.

COME AND SEE

Chris explained that this was Christ the King's name for RCIA, which Fr Patrick Hutton had encouraged them to use. It will start again in the autumn with one definite starter for reception into the Church, and a further enquirer.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chris advertised the Amazon Kindle book "40 days" – reflections for Christian leadership – and offered the link to anyone who would like it, with the offering expiring today.

Teresa reported that Francis Malley had written another book, royalties to MS Bedford, and that she could obtain copies to sell.

Parking

Rachel reported that sometimes Saturday afternoon parties make it impossible to park for the 6 pm Mass. On one occasion cars had illegally parked on the verge by the hall and as a result, a clause had been inserted into the hall booking contract stating that cars not able to use the main car park should park over at the Bunyan Centre.

COVID

Hilary reported that the new strains of COVID were more serious than the previous ones and that caution should continue to be exercised. It was reported that only a minority of the 10.30 congregation were now wearing masks and that this should be reinforced.

Confessions

Teresa wished to thank the priests who say the Latin Mass for their constantly being at church on Saturdays from 3 pm – 5 pm each week to hear confessions. Barbara will pass on her thanks.

Date of next meeting

Sunday 7th August after 10.30am Mass.

Chris closed in prayer.