

Minutes of Liturgy Committee Meeting 13.2.2022

Present: Josie, Liz, Trish, Alfredo, Tricia, Catherine, Martin and Fr Pawel. Apologies were received from Mavis

Martin started the meeting at 12.20pm with a prayer.

1.0 Minutes of the last meeting.

Liz asked if there were any issues with the minutes of the last meeting. Trish mentioned the importance of ventilation in the church. Fr said that the windows are kept closed during services but opened straight afterwards. One of the back doors is always open. He said he has to justify heating the church and letting all the heat escape through open windows.

Trish said that Jacqui Simpson's mum has made a good recovery.

2.0 Review of Advent /Christmas

2.1 Advent Carol Service

This went very well despite the format being changed a little due to illness in the choir. The congregation joined in with all hymns and a reasonable number of people attended. We have been doing this for about 10 years now and numbers have built up and it is now part of the parish calendar.

2.2 There was no parish carol service before Christmas but we did put one on after Christmas on 2nd January. However this was a bit of an anticlimax and not many people attended. We have talked about changing the format as the present format is a hybrid of religious and lighter hearted readings. We will think more about this when planning for Christmas 2022.

2.3 Christmas services.

The 6pm Mass went ahead without the children's nativity contribution as people dropped out due to the Covid numbers being so high. Despite this there were quite a large number at that mass, the Polish Mass and then a good number at Midnight Mass. There were 5 masses held over the 2 days with more than 300 attending overall. 50% of the choir at Midnight Mass were the Ryder Family! The Christmas Octave services were very low key, with just normal Masses celebrated.

3.0 24hrs before the Lord

We have traditionally held this in the parish and it is usually the 3rd Week of Lent - Friday through to Saturday. However, it needs lots of organisation and commitment from parishioners, and a few of the people we used to rely on are not in circulation now. After discussion it was agreed that we would do something to mark it on Friday 25th March, but not the full 24hrs. It was

agreed that we would start at 4.30pm with Adoration to include the children and parents from the Friday afternoon First Holy Communion Class, followed by evening prayer at 6pm, Stations of the Cross at 7pm and Mass at 8pm followed by Adoration, finishing with Compline at 10pm.

4.0 **Liturgy of Hours**

During Advent we held morning prayer on Saturday mornings, but this was very poorly attended. However we are continuing to hold zoom Evening Prayers every week on a Tuesday. It was agreed that we would hold the Morning Prayer as part of the Triduum on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

5.0 **Lent**

Fr will put on Confessions every weekday half an hour before mass 9.30am to 10am and Fridays 6.45 till 7.15pm

Liz said that in the past the choir has sung either the Asperges at the Penitential Rite during Sundays of Lent, or the Ash Wednesday psalm. Fr said he didn't mind which was sung, but to sing on alternate Sundays (1st 3rd 5th sprinkling Asperges/Ash Wednesday psalm). The choir will decide which they will do.

5.1 **Ash Wednesday**

There will be 3 Masses that day. 9.30am St Thomas More school Mass for just yrs 3/4/5/6. The infants will come into the church later for distribution of ashes and an explanation. It was agreed that this is a very sensible solution. KS1 will get more from their separate service rather than being crammed in for a full Mass. Liz noted that sometimes we have had ashes distributed on 1st Sun of Lent for those who hadn't been able to come on Ash Wednesday, but Fr said he would not be doing this. There will be a Mass for STB school here at 1.15pm, to which parishioners will be able to come, and a Mass at 8pm. Ashes will be sprinkled like last year.

5.2 **Stations of the Cross.**

This will be on Fridays at 7.15pm and also on Mondays straight after Mass as well. Liz noted that in the past the Friday Stations of the Cross has been led by parishioners rather than clergy. Fr said that if someone is happy to do this, he is happy to let them. It was agreed that parish groups would be approached and asked to lead Stations of the Cross. A notice will go into the newsletter with all the Friday dates asking for volunteers to lead the Stations of the Cross and for people to contact the parish office. Groups can organise how they want to do it and share it between them. (Childrens liturgy, Maintenance, Cleaning Group, UCM, Choir, etc)

5.3 **Holy week**

Liz said that on Palm Sunday we normally we all gather in the staff car park before 11am Mass. Fr said that weather permitting we can do for both the

9am and 6pm too. Therefore the Blessing of Palms and gospel outside and then procession into church.

5.3.1 **Maundy Thursday**

Mass of the Last Supper will be at 8pm. The Altar of Repose will be in hall. We don't know if there can be Washing of Feet yet. There will be Watching till 10pm.

5.3.2 **Good Friday**

Veneration of the Cross will be at 3pm and there will be Stations of Cross at 7.15pm. There will also be a special Stations of the Cross for the FHC children this year as there is such a big gap between Units 3 and 4 this year. This will be at 10am

5.3.3 **Holy Saturday**

This service will start at dusk as it must take place in darkness. Fr said that he will also be doing Blessing of the Food during the day for the Polish community.

5.3.4 **Easter Sunday**

There will be the usual Sunday Masses at 9am and 11am and also a Mass in Polish at 4pm. Martin said that there will be baptism during the 11am Mass. The parents have asked for this as it is the child's birthday.

6.0 **Reports**

6.1 **Adoration**

It was noted that some hours are very well attended but more people are needed between 5pm and 7pm. We have made appeals in the newsletter but have not been successful in getting more. Catherine said that a notice was put in the St Benedicts newsletters recently. We will see if there is any outcome from this.

6.2 **Childrens Liturgy**

Catherine said that this is being held once a fortnight at the 11am Mass. There are no more than 10 children coming at the moment, and Isla is helping Catherine. Before Covid numbers were anything up to 30, but it was noted that it is better to start smaller and build up. It was noted that some parents are happy to help with the activities. It was agreed that the dates for Children's Liturgy will go onto the Parish Diary page on the website and in the newsletter. Catherine gave Josie the dates up to the beginning of May.

6.3 **Servers**

Martin said that at the moment we only have the Uptons at 9am, Laura Warren-Heys at 11am and Simon D'Souza and Cavidu at 6pm. We tried to hold some training only Cavidu and Laura turned up. It was noted that a lot of previous servers are attending different schools and not coming to Mass

here. We may have an influx after the First Holy Communion programme finishes in June. Perhaps because they are not seeing altar servers on the altar, previous altar servers are not spurred on to do it. Fr said that if there are any altar servers in church for Mass they will be asked to serve.

6.4 **Choir**

Josie said that since coming back after easing of restrictions the choir has really struggled with numbers, sometimes with only 2 or 3 people singing at 11am Mass. We have lost 2 sopranos who are in St Francis parish Maidstone, who have decided not to come back – after all its so much easier not having to come up and down Bluebell Hill twice a week. We are starting to see a couple more slowly coming back, but we need some new members, especially tenors. Liz is having to sing tenor at the moment. It was agreed that we would have a recruitment drive after Easter when things in the choir are not so hectic. A big thankyou to Maria who joined last year as she has had to deal with learning a huge amount of music for Christmas and Lent/Holy Week/Easter. She is a star.

6.5 **Readers**

Things are picking up and more people are asking to go back onto the reader's rota. We need to set up some readers' training. Martin said that the last time we had any training it was on a Saturday morning for 2 hours with reflection and reading practice at the ambo. It was noted that the Hearing Aid Loop has been installed, but Alfredo cannot switch into the system and his hearing aids are not picking up some peoples' voices. Liz said that the ambo we use is very flat and something is needed to raise the Lectionary. All of this will be addressed in the training. It was agreed that a notice will go into the newsletter about going onto the readers rota. Josie agreed to make a complete list of all the current readers with their contact numbers.

6.6 **Catechesis**

Things have been very different this year.

6.6.1 **Confirmation**

Classes have been going since last year and Confirmation Mass is last Sunday of May 29th We have 13 candidates this year and things are going very well. Les Boulton, Martin and Christine Flood are the catechists and are a sufficient team.

6.6.2 **Baptism.**

Martin said that he had arranged a meeting but it had not happened, so needs to be rearranged. Liz said that she is now working Saturday mornings.

6.6.3 **First Reconciliation/Eucharist**

We started the programme in October 2021 and in order to accommodate 2 year's intake (after a few drop outs we have 54) with half the normal

amount of catechists we now have 3 classes spaced over a week with just the children. There is a class after school at St Benedict's and one after school in the parish hall for St Thomas More and one on a Saturday morning for St Thomas More and children from other schools within the parish boundaries. First Holy Communion Masses will take place end of May and June and the Thanksgiving Mass for all the children will be at 11am Mass on Corpus Christi.

6.7 **Welcome/Hospitality**

At 11am Catherine Law and Karen Hutchinson are welcomers, Lydia Burchell at 9am and the Carmichaels and Justyna at 6pm. Fr said that if we have a rota set up for tea and coffee after Mass this can be reinstated after Easter and cake sales also reinstated April/May. So over the next few weeks we will announce that we want to start it up again but we need a team so that the task is not all on one or two people. There will be some training of kitchen use and safety.

7. **Service for Sick and Housebound**

This is usually held once a year for those who can't come to church. Transport is usually provided by parishioners, then Mass with anointing followed by tea and coffee and cakes. Fr set the date for 3pm on Sunday 11th September. Liz said that in the past Catherine has organised children at St Benedicts to make invitations, and the Eucharistic Ministers would take them to the people they visit with Holy Communion. We could also send invitations to people who we haven't seen at Mass from our database. We will need people to volunteer to provide transport and also someone to introduce them to people at church. It was noted that when we were live streaming Masses these people were still able to be part of the community.

8.0 **Any Other Business**

- 8.1 Liz said that for weeks she was able to live stream Mass at St Simons when her Father was ill and she was with him in the Isle of Wight and it was so important to her to be able to connect with the parish community here. Trish asked if there could be one livestreamed mass at a weekend as this is invaluable to those who are housebound. Fr said that although it had been very useful here during lockdowns and he had had a lot of good feedback, he did not want to start it up again. Some parishes had been doing livestreaming for a long time before covid and they have a permanent system and equipment in place. Here we were using Fr's own personal laptop which was often subject to the vagaries of the internet and You Tube. He said that he would like to concentrate on bringing people back to the church. When Liz asked whether we could set up a permanent system here Fr said that it is expensive and the Diocesan Levy has now increased by 100% and the parish is having to be very careful what we are planning and spending at the moment. The system would have to be set up properly with

new equipment and not makeshift as before, and with a better view of the sanctuary.

- 8.2 Trish said that she had had a phone call from May Twigg who is now back home but has had a bad fall. Trish will start taking her communion again.
- 8.3 Alfredo asked that whenever there is an event in the diary to please put it in the parish diary on the website, as well as regular things like Scouts and Choir on Thursdays, UCM etc. Josie agreed to do so.
- 8.4 **Organ repair.**
Josie said that this is in hand. The repair company are waiting on a delivery of parts which could take up to 6 weeks.
- 8.5 Alfredo said that so much work has been done in the church with the installation of the new heating system that we need to have a spring cleaning day. Saturday 26th March was agreed.
- 8.6 Liz said that the list of anniversaries in the bidding prayers each Sunday is getting longer and longer. She suggested that after 5 years of death, instead of mentioning them individually that they be included in the "all those whose anniversaries occur around this time". It was noted that the parish sick used to be named in the newsletter every week but were relegated to a book which parishioners can make entries into. It was agreed that any changes have to be done carefully, and Fr said he wouldn't change it for now. We can talk about it again during readers training.

Meeting closed at 2.10pm with a prayer from Father.