

St. Marie's Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting held Friday 12th January 2018
In Cathedral House at 7:45pm

Present:

Niall Corroon
Fr. Christopher Posluszny
Hugo Teruzzi
Josip Korbar
Eileen Maher

Apologies:

Steve O'Hara
Moya O'Hara
Candida Calvert
Leandro Martins

Guest:

Mark Linfitt

Opening Prayer: The opening prayer was supplied and read by Eileen Maher

The PPC welcomed Mark Linfitt as an observer to the PPC meeting.

1. Advent and Christmas Review

The PPC reviewed how the parish was able to manage the recent seasons of Advent and Christmas, and its response to the tasks of additional solemnities and decoration.

It was widely felt amongst members that the Cathedral decorations were the finest in recent years, and thanks were given to the Interior Decoration team for their accomplishment. One particular change was the new positioning of the crib, complete with new figures. The new crib was placed near the south door, and was an open construction surrounded by hay. At the Vigil the children carried the Manger, swaddling clothes and bags of hay in procession to the front of church. They then followed the servers down the side aisle to the Crib where the manger and swaddling clothes were laid and the hay was scattered supervised by Fr Lee Marshall and the stewards.

At Midnight Mass, the figures were carried in procession with a young lad carrying the Christ child. The Bishop, Fr Chris and the altar servers processed to the Crib. After all was arranged the Bishop blessed and incensed the crib and said the prayer.

Masses over Christmas were well-attended (particularly the Vigil and Midnight masses); altogether attendance amounted to the highest numbers seen during Fr. Chris' tenure as Cathedral Dean.

One particular delight at the Midnight Mass was hearing the newly-refurbished Cathedral organ for the first time in nearly 7 years. Being played at Christmas Day also marked the exact 142nd anniversary of the organ's first ever performance on Christmas Day in 1875.

ACTION: The parish is to continue with the general layout of the Nativity as introduced this year. However in future years, more hay is to be made available, both to enhance the scene and to give more children the opportunity to present it at the Vigil Mass.

2. Parish AGM

This PPC meeting was only days prior to St. Marie parish Annual General Meeting, scheduled for Sunday 21st January following the 10:30am mass. Prior to the meeting, both Niall (secretary) and Candida had produced leaflets to be handed out to parishioners over that weekend, detailing the work of the PPC over the last year. After PPC members reviewed both documents, it was decided that Candida's proposal (more of a visual presentation as opposed to a standard written report) would be more digestible for parishioners. With amendments, the PPC decided it should be produced for publication with the weekend bulletins.

Regarding the meeting itself, this was set for advertisement in the bulletin for the weekends of 13th/14th and 20th/21st January. As the PPC Secretary is unavailable for the meeting, the meeting's minutes will be recorded by Eileen Maher and most other PPC members have made themselves available for attendance.

3. Lent and Easter 2018

The season of Lent is fast-approaching, with Ash Wednesday on 14th February. In previous years, the parish has held special talks during the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week (this year on 26th-28th March) – each trio of talks with a connecting theme. Traditionally, †Ralph has delivered one of these, although the PPC are not sure of his availability this year.

PPC members discussed a possible theme for the talks this year, and it was suggested that the theme of Forgiveness could be suitable. It was suggested that Fr. Lee Marshall, who has delivered successful talks in the past, might be suitable to organise some of the talks and speakers. Niall Corroon has been tasked with getting in touch with him regarding this.

Throughout the season of Lent, it was also suggested that parishioners may wish to prepare for the 'five Saturdays challenge' which was associated with the recent Fatima visitation. This could be done throughout May, and involves consecutive confessions on Saturdays with the support of a prayer community.

ACTION: Niall Corroon is to contact Fr. Lee Marshall, and also members of the Rosary group to consider arranging the above events.

4. Organ Restoration/Fundraising

So far, over £16,000 has been raised for the organ restoration fund. The PPC had a discussion about how long the parish should campaign for funds for the organ restoration – it was agreed that this should continue until the required amount of £38,000 is raised, and fundraising for parish charities will recommence afterwards.

When discussing fundraising in general, there was acknowledgement that this can often be difficult in St. Marie's, and funds raised (although greatly appreciated) are not necessarily significant relative to the number of parishioners, in comparison with other parishes. There are a variety of complex reasons for this, but it was felt that increased awareness amongst parishioners may help to raise the necessary funds. A member of the Finance Committee will help to raise awareness of the necessity of fundraising at their next presentation at the end of Sunday masses.

Upcoming fundraising events include a Beetle Drive, which is a game played in teams scheduled for Saturday 27th January. Tickets are being sold at weekend masses prior to this event.

The organ has begun to be played at weekend masses, and as expected will need time to continue to develop and to enable satisfactory tuning. A date is currently being set for the premiere of the organ, and will feature a concert with a prominent organist. This will be after Easter, and will also incorporate the blessing of the organ by †Ralph.

5. First Holy Communion

Regarding the First Holy Communion preparation course, there was concern raised that although this is popular and well-attended (particularly this year), the ratio of children and parents to parishioners/volunteers is quite low, and those volunteers present often struggle to form individual interactions with attendees on the programme.

Involvement of parishioners and catechists requires a lot of dedication – more catechists are needed. Existing catechists are to personally contact various parishioners to generate interest.

ACTION: First Holy Communion preparation sessions run on Sundays between 3:30pm and 5pm. If people are interested in assisting, even on a temporary basis, they are to discuss with Candida Calvert.

6. Fr. Chris Update

A recent concert featuring the Tallis Scholars was well-attended, very successful and generated some profit. In November this year, there are plans for another significant concert to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One. This anniversary will also be marked with a special mass on 11/11/18.

Fr. Stan, who was previously a curate at the Cathedral, will be living at Cathedral House and assisting with masses. Another priest is coming in September for six months.

Hugo Teruzzi is leaving the PPC and moving to Cheltenham. He has kindly offered to continue with website management for as long as is needed, although for convenience he would be happy for the parish to start looking for others to continue this role.

NEXT MEETING: Monday 12th February at 7:45pm

Future meetings (all parishioners are welcome to attend):

Friday 16th March

Friday 20th April