

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

Thursday February 3rd 2011

Minutes

Present: Fr Gerry Murphy, Andrew Forde, Stephen O'Neill, Davide Casabianca, Mary Stark, Derrick Tranter, Jean Grieg, Mary Nelson, Catherine Morrison

Apologies: David Moss

The meeting began with prayer

There were no minutes to be read from the previous meeting as it had to be cancelled due to the severe weather conditions.

Item 1: Renewal of Acts

Fr Murphy asked the council to read the Parish Pastoral Constitution which was last amended in September 1999 and to propose any changes which may be relevant today. Any changes to be considered should be forwarded to the Bishop's Office, Fr Murphy and the Chairperson, Andrew Forde.

Item 2: Parish Activities

It was mentioned that there seems to be a notable lack of interest and support in any proposed activities that have been suggested. A discussion ensued which tried to address how we can overcome this problem. Fr Murphy was particularly concerned about the lack of youth coming to Church services and engaging in parish events and his concern is that if we don't have a lively youth this will in turn impact on the parish as a whole as they are our future. A whole generation has disappeared from the parish community which will result in the closure of the parish. It was mentioned that most families have lots of other commitments through the week and also weekends so finding the time to suit everyone is very hard.

Catherine mentioned that we should take small steps and target the parents of the catechism children. It was suggested that we have some youth Masses to enable those children who can use their musical skills to do so in that context.

Derrick mentioned that the council members make themselves known to new members in the parish and give them a warm welcome which will in turn encourage them to join any activities. He also suggested that Fr greet the parishioners outside the church at the end of Mass. Fr responded by saying that he does this before Mass begins as there is usually someone waiting to speak to him after Mass.

Catherine suggested that we ask some of the parents who have expressed an interest in helping with children's Mass before, to form a group and take over the organising of the youth/children's Mass. As it is envisioned to have maybe one every month it would take the pressure from those who already put a lot of effort into the weekly catechetical sessions and give others a role in the parish. This was agreed by the committee.

Item 3: Youth and Catechesis

As much of what was discussed above related to the youth the main topic to be discussed here was the children's catechism class. The question was asked as to why do the children attend the catechism class but not Mass? At the beginning of the preparation the parents were given a letter which stated that in order to be presented for the Sacraments the children need to attend both Mass and class on a regular basis. 80% attendance is the requirement. All families need to be registered in the parish also.

Mary Stark suggested that the catechists keep the parents informed as much as possible as to what the children are learning so that if need be it can be supplemented at home.

Catherine voiced her concern over those children who have regularly missed the classes and come back sometimes after 3 weeks and haven't been reading the material they would have missed in the class.

Fr was concerned that the catechists are not making him aware of those families who do not attend Mass and are using the classes to have their children prepared but themselves don't want to make a commitment to their faith.

Mary Nelson suggested that as from next year we ask the parents to attend a short course on a new resource called Anchor which has been prepared and used in England with some good results.

It was suggested that those who are currently preparing for Confirmation may want to be involved in helping with the catechism class or possibly the children's liturgy group.

Andrew suggested that a questionnaire be put together based on the issues which were discussed in the meeting and given to the parishioners. Davide mentioned that sometimes it is necessary to 'ask' people to help as you are more likely to get a positive response. We decided to put the questionnaire together first and see what the parishioners feel about various things first.

Item 4: Fabrics

At the moment there are two members of the fabrics committee and that includes Fr Murphy. Fr is looking for people who are willing to help out with this important aspect of our church organisation as the building is a bad state of repair. Fr has had an estimate of £366,000 to have the repairs done, without the repairs we are looking at 4-5 years before

the building becomes unusable. Any possibility of lottery funding will not happen until 2014 at the earliest and the parish were turned down by the heritage funding. There needs to be 5 or 6 people on the committee to liaise with the diocesan fabrics committee. Jean said that Mrs Francis Wegg and her daughter, from Sacred Heart in Torry would be happy to come and speak to the committee about how they received £156,000 for their church from the heritage fund. Davide Casabianca, Andrew Forde, Mary Stark and Derrick Tranter all volunteered to join the fabrics com.

AOB

Fr Murphy mentioned that he would like to get porta cabins for the space behind the church. He has spoken to Richie Turnbull from Greenbell porta cabins and to purchase two, joined together, which would be double the size of our soup kitchen and cost £6,000(plus). Richie T said that we would be allowed to have them on the property for three years and could ask for an extension of a further three years. The cabins would be the property of the Church. Fr has also looked into the possibility of renting out the soup kitchen which could generate an income of £1,000 per calendar month for the parish. At the moment this is only an idea but will be discussed more fully with the fabrics committee. He is also looking into having a garage built as permission was given when Fr Stuart Chalmers was parish priest. Plans are in the parish office for such a structure to be built.

Fr also mentioned that he feels the weekly bulletin which is costing £29.50 per month is not the best use of money and would like to cancel it. The Living Faith magazine is a quarterly magazine from Redemptory's but has a minimum of 25 copies at 60p each. There is always 5 or 6 copies left and now with the passing of one of our parishioners who purchased 4 copies this will mean 10 unsold magazines. The cost to the parish of the unsold magazines will be £24 per annum. To cancel the subscription would mean that those who regularly buy the other 15 will be disappointed.

Derrick offered to do a new bulletin for Fr and Fr will communicate with Derrick regarding this issue.

Jean mentioned that she will be putting a list up for this year's pantomime, Jack and the Beanstalk, which will be December 9th. It is a Friday evening. Although the tickets are £22.50 for adults and £21.50 per child the money won't be required until September.

The date of the next meeting which will be the AGM was agreed for

Thursday May 26th 7 pm

There being no further business the meeting was brought to a close with a prayer from the priest.