

Mary, Mother of God Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

Thursday 23 September 2021 at 7pm

St Winefride's Presbytery and via Zoom

1. JD led with an opening prayer
- 2 Present :- Joe Deegan (Chair) Agnes Tetteh (vice Chair) Father Paul Grogan, Father Peter Morkah, Sean Kilduff, Julia Mason, Ben Lavin, Michelle Vink, Monica Spyrka,
3. Apologies:-Bernadette Benyon, Moira Page, Sandra Scully, Christian Oldcorn. Lissa Oldcorn, Ellie Rose Henry, Eve Wright, Alison Park

4. Matters arising from previous minutes (24 June 2021)

Divine Renovation—Training for Father Paul including Parish Mission and Co-responsibility which has been very valuable

Million Minutes—A programme for young people. We are a beacon parish 1 of 5 in the country

Faith and Light--A meeting will be held in October with a Diocesan mass to be held at St Winefride's in November

SVP works are ongoing including assisting with food parcels and wider community links with the housebound

Older peoples groups are continuing with weekday meals and newsletters

Primary Schools—Separate report issued by Ben Lavin

Eco matters—some initiatives including orchard, vegetable and flower gardens

Evangelisation—Father Paul advised that lay people appointed by the Bishop would be visiting parishes to find out our views on parish renewal and the mission of involving new members from inside and outside our parish. To be held October or November.

Grail Project—A £5000 grant for young people. A thought might be to provide musical resources for our new Youth Worker

40 hours devotion—this had been well supported with many groups partaking. An annual event.

## 5. Group Matters

Charismatic Group—The group had not been able to meet due to Covid but had been Bible sharing on Whats App. First meeting to be held this week

Junior Youth Group---Plan in place to meet for Trampolining event.

Catechesis—family Masses to be held 30 October for St Johns reception parents and 17 October for St Winefrides Reception parents.

Liturgical ministries—now 2 sacristy teams of 6

## 6. Adult Formation.

See separate report .

It was felt that the mass could be explained at the family masses.

## 7. Catechesis

A long discussion was held about the provision of Catechesis for the school children

The programme was continuing

Family catechesis versus school based

The Bishops desire was for family based catechesis but we had tried this method without success

It was felt that parents might not have the knowledge to teach their children in the faith

Sadly there is a very significant fall off of both children and parents after the sacraments have been received

We need to pray that more parents will become involved

It was agreed that the school based sessions would continue and these would be supplemented by Sessions with the parents led by Father Paul. School to be the venue for some adult formation perhaps before/ during /after the children have their sessions.

## 8. Parish Youth Worker

Andy Watts has been appointed after an interview process. A 3 year contract starting 1 October.

Andy will foster links with the schools as well as the existing Parish groups.

Andy is a member of Youth 2000

This is a very exciting opportunity for the parish.

#### 9. Charisms

Father Paul advised that the Franciscan Friars may be able to help with a process whereby the Friars can assist with discernment of a person's gifts for the building of the church.

#### 10. Retreat to the Briery Ilkley

A group of parishioners exercising leadership or carrying out voluntary work in the parish were to meet to explore both their own personal renewal and also to consider the needs of our parish post pandemic

#### 11. Finance

Father Paul advised that the Parish finances were improving and in summary we were approx. £12k in the black. A new Finance committee had been formed and halls income was encouraging. Father Paul was to deliver an annual appeal at this month's masses.

#### 12 . Parish Secretary

It was felt that there was a need for a Parish Secretary to free up Father Paul to do his priestly work and to avoid a very real risk of burn out. All agreed that a Parish secretary is essential.

Consideration to be given to timing /financial arrangements etc –discuss with Finance committee

#### 13 Any other Business

None

#### 14 Date of Next meeting---- Thursday 16 December at 7pm

## **Catholic Life Report**

### Schools

- Masses and Liturgies

In both schools, we have been very excited to have whole school worship in the hall again as well as class masses in church. It has been lovely to see all the children coming together to pray as a community. We have started our calendar of worship with a welcome back worship, Virtues worship, Worship based on the Wednesday Word and a celebration assembly.

- Family Masses

In this new term and through the year, we will start to celebrate 'Family Masses' where each class in school will be invited to a mass to celebrate being part of the St John's and St Winefride's parish community.

- Pupil Chaplains and Mini Vinnie's

Both of these groups have had initial meetings. Our new pupil chaplains will plan masses and worships and lead prayer throughout the year. These pupils are from Y5 and are faith role models. They will be supported 3 mornings a week by Pauline Sellars.

- Church Year

We are hoping this year, that we will be able to celebrate the different parts of the Church's year through worships and Liturgies in school and church, including Harvest festival, Penitential services, whole school masses, Carol service etc.

- Wednesday Word

This is still being sent out electronically to all parents and the staff are using it as a resource for planning worships. Throughout school, we are also introducing our 'RE Word of the Week', which will be displayed and discussed throughout the week in class – this will be whatever the Wednesday W

- Faith in Action

We are hoping to start the Faith in Action programme this year, as it was put on hold by COVID. We are hoping that Andy Watts, the new parish youth worker, will be able to assist with the programme across both schools.

- Charity work

We are hoping to begin some charity activities again this year which haven't been possible during COVID times. Charities to be supported during the year will be discussed with staff and children to gather their ideas.

We will be looking at ways that we can assist Michelle Vink from Catholic Care to keep links during this time where we are unable to hold our Intergenerational Afternoon Teas. We hope to

re-introduce these as soon as possible in both schools. The children have made cards for Michelle's group for Christmas, Easter, Remembrance Sunday and Grandparents Day during COVID times.

- RE Teaching/Worship

A half-termly newsletter is also sent out by both schools to tell the parents about the topics being explored in RE that half term. Also we now include a parish update in our newsletters.

- Prayer Buddies

During the year, we are hoping to 'buddy up' with the children from St Winefride's and have 'Prayer buddies' that we pray for at key times in the school and church year. The children are also making prayer cards for the sick of the parish, hopefully to bring a bit of cheer.

- Sacraments

We hope that the Sacramental programme will be able to run smoothly this year, with no 'catch up' necessary. Initial meeting with parents and Father Paul have taken place.

#### **Update on adult faith formation activities**

- We are about to complete our second Sycamore group aimed at adults who are exploring Christianity and also those thinking about the possibility of becoming a Catholic. We've been mainly using the RCIA recommended pathway for the choice of films:<https://www.sycamore.fm/pathways/c-sacramental-pathways/rcia-complete/>
- The course has been running since January 2021, entirely online due to the national restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The evening sessions have taken place fortnightly, with a break over the summer.
- We've had regular attendance from three people, all at very different thresholds of conversion with discussion support from a parishioner and a seminarian from the diocese who is currently studying in Rome.
- Each session is based around a theme with a film from the Sycamore series with some discussion time, after each session participants receive a follow-up email with the film link to watch again and some suggested material to watch/read to

help deepen their knowledge and understanding.

- Despite the challenges of running an online course for the first time, there have been no issues with IT, people have committed to regular attendance and the group, though small, has bonded well.
- Pastoral support has also been available via email and phone from myself and Fr Paul. As this run of sessions is coming to an end on the 6th October, I am encouraging the current participants to reflect on next steps so that if they wish to continue with their journey of enquiry, they will be supported. I'm keen to see that people are not simply abandoned and have the opportunity to build on this experience, should they wish to continue.

Some observations:

- The ability to run this group online (and other faith formation sessions for parents requesting sacraments) has been very helpful, given the pandemic. There are obvious advantages to meeting online.

That said, online only can be a barrier to those people who are not confident with IT or lack the necessary tools (decent broadband connection, a device other than a phone etc.) and prefer a face-to-face experience. I would be concerned about people being put off by this.

- We also lack a good space for small group face-to-face meetings - the halls are in constant use, and being large spaces they don't lend themselves well to this kind of activity, there is also a requirement for wifi and equipment to show films. Some preliminary conversations on this did begin to take place in late 2019/early 2020 when we ran a pilot Sycamore group in the parish (e.g. purchase of a smart TV) but things stalled due to the pandemic and factors such as loss of income in the parish. Interestingly the Alpha course was originally intended to be run in non-church settings to appeal to people who had little if any contact with the church.

- It would be good to see more people involved in the running of any future Sycamore groups, especially sharing their own experiences in group discussions. We are called to witness to and share our faith experiences in an appropriate way to encourage those who are seeking to know more about Christianity. It is important that a range of voices, experiences and insights are heard since, although we have much in common, no two faith journeys are the same. I would be happy to speak to anyone who would be interested in the possibility of becoming involved with future Sycamore and adult faith formation activities in the parish.

**Alison Park 21st September 2021**