

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION & ST JOSEPH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Meeting: **Thursday 21 April 2022, 2 pm in the Upper Room**

"We are a people called to live and proclaim the Gospel and make disciples."

M I N U T E S

Opening Prayer based on the Road to Emmaus, led by Peter Evans

1. Present: Fr John Chadwick, Dcn Hugh Parry, Peter Thomson, Mary Thomson, Peter Evans, Pete Barry, Lesley King, Irene Cradick. Unable to attend: Johanna Mills

2. The Minutes of 14.03.22 were agreed and have been sent to PB for inclusion on the website

3. Matters of the moment: Reflections on Easter liturgies: The Easter Triduum was considered to be truly prayerful, blessed and spiritually uplifting. There was a real buzz throughout all the services. Gratitude was expressed to **Dcn Hugh**, for all he did; to **Judy Cooper** for taking on so much of the music at short notice; to **Paul Thomas** for all his work with the servers and, with **Wendy Link**, playing such a vital role in live streaming and operating the screens; to the singers who stepped in so admirably, in Richard's absence; to **Richard** and **Theresa Martin** for supplying all the words for the screens and to the congregation on Easter Sunday, who moved up and over on Easter Sunday, allowing us to fill every seat in the church and in the chapel, with some standing. Sharing the load is the hallmark of a caring parish. *We give glory to God through our service to others.*

Walk of Witness on Good Friday: Thanks were expressed to PT and MT for organising this very successful Witness walk on what was a lovely day. Forty-five people started from Stanpit and it had become 50 (and a dog) by the time the Church was reached. Other churches had arranged events that day and suggestions were made about possible improvements for future years: i) Starting later to arrive at church nearer to the time of the Stations of the Cross, ii) Approaching other churches to link with them, iii) arranging the Walk between St Joseph's and the Priory.

Use of parish facilities on Good Friday by AA: Although they were happy to change their time to accommodate parish use of the Centre, it caused great distress to one person: In line with *Giving glory to God through our service to others* Fr John does not want this to happen again. **We** must work around their needs/times or find suitable accommodation elsewhere on the site. *Also, be aware of Lenten lunch*

Clearing away the altar of repose on Maundy Thursday. Arrangements for doing this were overlooked and thus left to Dcn Hugh and Margaret, making it a very late night in a tiring week. This needs to be addressed for next year, perhaps with a group of willing helpers.

4. The Way Forward:

Celebration of achievements: Many instances of enthusiasm and renewal, revitalising the parish were shared: FHC parents gathering in the Upper Room, Dads wanting to continue meeting, feedback from people locally and elsewhere grateful for livestreaming

Suggestions made about Ideas into Action were greeted with enthusiasm. It is expected that they will be followed up but it was not confirmed how they will be addressed and by whom.

PT reminded members that he would be stepping down as Chair, following this meeting. Fr J thanked him for his dedicated leadership over the last 18 months and congratulated the PC as a whole on the tremendous amount that had been achieved over the 2+ years of the pandemic. The parish had not only survived, but flourished, with many new initiatives undertaken eg PB's livestreaming of Masses, appreciated by so many and IC's 'Chat News', which had kept many in touch with church and each other. As a PC/parish, we also had to manage the challenge of Fr J's own ill health - and Fr J paid special tribute to Dcn Hugh for the fantastic work he had done in this respect.

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The future: With a lack of volunteers coming forward and renewing the Council, there has been a time of reflection on the purpose and perception of the PC. Though the Pastoral Council is essential, one aspect being to hold the parish priest and deacon to account, as well as share the workload, it was agreed that the PC meetings be 'paused,' as the format must change, as the current model is not sustainable. The period of discernment, agreed by everyone, will consider how the PC will function as the parish moves into a new exciting period post lockdown: a sacred opportunity for growth: a period of 40 days of prayer and reflection for discernment, an increase in deliberate prayer to seek guidance, so that we may listen to the Lord.

We must consider how do we support the Ministry of the Parish? Support the Ministries? Who is the parish for? What is our vision? The PC is there to promote the mission of the parish, *Giving glory to God through service to others*. Washing feet.

Current members will continue to hold their responsibilities and links with the different groups until the discernment period is completed. They may well continue beyond that depending upon the outcome of the prayer period. Ideally, current members should steer the discernment process for the whole parish community, eg. 'Parish in Council' idea at Mass, was discussed, where everyone is engaged with the process, opportunities to speak etc, alongside other opportunities to contribute, for those who feel unable to speak in public. All this needs to be facilitated and it may be that the current PC be instrumental in bringing to birth the next chapter of our life as a parish. A meeting date is to be fixed to keep focus. PT has offered to provide mentorship for future members/chair.

The context is now different and we should utilise the Synodal process to enable many more people to engage in our life and mission. Everyone has a right to have a say about the future. To establish small groups, listening groups, and enhance cohesion and support those who are actually doing the work, Fr John will instigate a regular soup and roll lunch on a Wednesday during term time in the Upper Room, inviting volunteers and others to join him. It is envisaged that this will be a welcome additional avenue for people to offer feedback and will provide a space for those who are engaged in different ministries to come together without an agenda, other than to support one another and this will help to discern a way forward in establishing a parish team for those in ministry to function after Pentecost. In summary, this discernment process must be genuine. If we are to be genuinely open to the Spirit, which doesn't end at Pentecost, we must have no preconditions. Fr John identified the core team as consisting of Fr J, Dcn H, EE and WW; no remit was identified at this stage.

Other matters:

It was confirmed that Ann Marie Bridle will arrange finger food for **Fr Paul's Jubilee** on 29 May and Jan Tubb will make the cake.

It was agreed that IC should approach members of the Social Committee, and then other volunteers, to arrange a **Platinum Jubilee** celebration, the format of which is to be decided, old, young, all, afternoon tea, barbecue, neighbours etc.

It was agreed that we should use the company who supplied the Easter cards to produce **welcome cards**, giving information about services, contact details etc for seekers, as we develop the outreach aspect of Bric a Brac, through repository and Fair Trade items.

Date of next meeting tbc

Closing Prayer led by Fr John asking the Holy Spirit to inspire us with strength and courage as we move forward