



Good Shepherd Parish Think Tank Meeting- 12th November 2022

Attendees: Isaac Amieghemen, Reg Carter, Pat Faulconbridge, Nikky Gudgeon, Polly Jarvis, Theresa Joseph, Francesca Lynch, Philip Martin, Janet Myers, Rebecca O'Connor, Caroline Smith, Adrian Staiano, David Staiano, Christine Thomas and Cath Verhoeven. Fr Philipp Ziomek also joined the meeting in time for the discussions on item 4 onwards on the agenda.

Reg chaired the meeting.

1. Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Reg.

2. Welcome to new members

A warm welcome was extended to Nicky from St Anthony's who was attending her first meeting of the group.

3. Notes of the previous meeting held on 17th September 2022

The notes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record. It was however suggested that the note of the discussion on the parish bereavement team should be amended to include a reference to the need to develop stronger links with nursing and care homes, funeral directors and hospices. **ACTION- Philip** to amend the notes accordingly and then post them on the think tank's page on the parish website and on the notice board in the church narthex.

a) Fatima event- Following the success of this year's Fatima event, Caroline confirmed that Fr Philipp was keen for Good Shepherd to host an annual visitation of the relics of Ss Jacinta and Francisco and the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. It is hoped that the visitation in 2023 will be on Sunday, 15th October. Caroline will confirm the arrangements in due course and will seek help from the think tank as appropriate. **ACTION- Caroline** to action in due course.

b) Formation/promotion of a parish finance resource team- Philip advised that Julie Rawding had now agreed to lead this work and was in the process of drawing together a small team to support the work. Christine mentioned that she knows of a bid writer, whose fees are very reasonable. It was agreed Philip would email

Christine with details of the parish's proposed approach and she will then provide the relevant contact details if the person concerned is interested in helping. Philip explained that he couldn't at this stage guarantee that the parish would be prepared

to pay for such support but he would forward details of the contact person to Julie for her to consider. **ACTION- Philip/Christine** to follow up accordingly.

Francesca advised she is to meet on Wednesday of next week with someone from Newark and Sherwood CVS to explore what advice/assistance, if any, they can provide the parish in terms of its fundraising activities. It was agreed that she will feedback to Julie as appropriate. **ACTION- Francesca** to action accordingly.

c) **Alpha course-** Reg has contacted Fraser who advises that the Alpha programme is to be more fully introduced next year, reflecting some initial teething problems with it this year. Further advice will be provided to the think tank at that time. **ACTION- Fraser** to action at the appropriate time.

d) **First Holy Communion Programme-** Reg confirmed that non-Sacramentally active parents were being encouraged to attend Mass on a regular basis so they are able to offer spiritual support to their children through the First Holy Communion arrangements. Additionally, non-Catholic parents were being encouraged to seek baptism themselves through the RCIA programme. The response to this approach has thus far been positive.

4. Scheduling of Mass

Philip introduced this item, referring to his paper on the feedback received from parishioners regarding the options for rescheduling Mass reflecting that in the near future Fr Philipp will not routinely have support from other priests. With that in mind, it will be necessary as a minimum for one Mass to be dropped on Sunday. Additionally, the current arrangements for a 10.00am Mass at Good Shepherd and a 10.45am Mass at St Anthony's cannot be sustained without some adjustment to their timings.

Christine tabled a summary of the responses received from parishioners at St Anthony's which needed to be considered alongside the responses from parishioners at the Good Shepherd.

There has been a total of 70 responses across the two churches- 34 from Good Shepherd (equating to 6% of its average congregation each Saturday/Sunday) and 36 from St Anthony's (equating to 80% of its average Sunday Mass attendance).

Twelve different options had been expressed by the respondents, the most popular by far being Option 3 which was favoured by 38 (58%) of the 65 respondents who expressed a specific preference. None of the other eleven options garnered support from more than seven respondents.

There was a wide ranging discussion about the different options, during which the following points were made:

- It was recognised that the final decision had to rest with Fr Philipp as parish priest, but the think tank should try to provide helpful advice.

- In considering the issue the think tank was mindful of the demands being made on Fr Philipp's time at week-ends but also during the week. It was suggested therefore that Fr Philipp may wish to routinely drop at least one Mass during weekdays to free up his time. This could if necessary be replaced by a Eucharistic Service of the Word.
- It was agreed in providing its advice the group should be cognisant of the need to continue to offer a family friendly Mass on Sunday mornings so that our children, as the future of the church, can be supported/encouraged to attend Mass.
- Good Shepherd and the Cathedral are understood to be the only churches in the Nottingham area to offer a Sunday evening Mass at the present time.
- St Anthony's would be keen if possible to continue to have a Mass on Sunday mornings at a time that allows parishioners to stay for refreshments/social interactions after Mass without impacting on their Sunday lunch arrangements.
- Fr Philipp ideally needs adequate time after each Mass to be able to engage with parishioners on a face to face basis. It was also necessary to be mindful of the time it will take Fr Philipp to travel to and from Calverton and that he needs time to prepare for each Mass. A suggestion was made that we should therefore ideally allow at least two hours between the start of each Mass.
- Parishioners should be encouraged to contact the parish office if they have queries about any particular issues, thereby freeing up Fr Philipp's time. It was recognised however that any new arrangements for Mass should still afford Fr Philipp time to greet parishioners personally after Mass.
- There was concern that it was not reasonable to expect Fr Philipp to celebrate three Masses in a four hour period on Sunday morning. It was felt that this might not be sustainable in the long term.
- Baptisms which have hitherto taken place on Sundays may have to be moved to Saturdays to accommodate the rescheduled Mass times. In order to support that arrangement it might be necessary in some circumstances for several (up to four) baptisms to be held simultaneously.
- Similarly, weddings will have to be scheduled to reflect the time available on Saturdays. This was not felt to be a major issue given that weddings would normally be expected to be booked well in advance.

With all that in mind, it was agreed that the group should advise the following to Fr Philipp:

(a) As previously mentioned, Option 3 was by far the most popular option favoured by those respondents who had expressed a specific preference. This argues for a 6.00pm Saturday Vigil Mass at Good Shepherd and for an 8.00am and 9.45am Mass at Good Shepherd followed by an 11.15am Mass at St Anthony's. Under this option there would not be a Sunday evening Mass.

(b) However, given the group's concerns about Fr Philipp's well-being and the future sustainability of having to celebrate three Masses in a relatively short period of time on Sunday mornings, a majority of the group on a show of hands favoured a different option, viz:

Saturday Vigil (Good Shepherd) 6.00pm
Sunday (Good Shepherd) 9.30 am or 9.45am
Sunday (St Anthony's) 11.00am or 11.15am
Sunday (Good Shepherd) 5.30pm

This would mean the discontinuation of the Sunday 8.00am Mass at Good Shepherd.

Given there has already been extensive consultation the group did not feel it would be appropriate to seek the parish's further views on this issue.

ACTION- Fr Philipp to consider this advice and decide on the rescheduling.

5. Parish liturgical calendar

Caroline and Theresa updated the group on their initial work in developing an annual parish liturgical calendar to facilitate forward planning and preparation for major themes and Saints' and feast days. An early draft was tabled. Further work on this will be informed by the annual diocesan Ordo published ahead of the new liturgical year.

The group commended Caroline and Theresa on their excellent work to date. It was suggested that the events in the calendar should be of a limited number to avoid overload and that the idea of a focused/thematic approach was supported. Leads will need to be identified for each event at the appropriate time. It will be helpful in due course to seek to involve our schools in some of the events, perhaps through project related activities. **ACTION- Caroline/Theresa** to progress the work accordingly and keep the think tank informed.

6. Parish bereavement team

Rebecca updated the group on this initiative. It is hoped that the initiative can start from January 2023 perhaps initially involving monthly meetings. Rebecca has not to date received any offers of help in this respect but Reg and Christine volunteered to provide support. **ACTION- Rebecca** to provide further feedback at the group's next meeting.

7. Future agenda items

It was agreed that school links should be an item on the agenda for the group's next meeting assuming Andy and Celine are able to attend. **ACTION- Philip** to include on the agenda for the meeting.

8. Date of meetings in 2023

It was agreed that the group should continue to meet on a two monthly basis starting in January 2023. **ACTION- Philip** to book the parish centre and circulate the proposed dates as soon as possible.

9. Closing Prayer

The meeting closed with a prayer led by David.