



Jesmond St Mary Partnership Minutes

Via Zoom 6.30pm

2 July 2020

1 Opening Prayer led by Rachael

2 Attendance, Apologies

In attendance:

Rachael B (Chair), Bill B, Fr Michael, Julia F, Fr Sean, Fr Shaun, Catherine He, Dave McG, Mike P, Jennifer Ri, Jane R. Barbara C (mins)

Apologies: Fr David (Dean), Michael Howard, Veronica Hargreaves

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

| Description | Action / Discussion |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Minutes and Matters Arising | JF reminded the group that “ <i>unlocking the mysteries of the Bible</i> ”, due to be held at Holy Name over the past couple of months will still go ahead once restrictions are lifted. CH reported that the Centre for Catholic Studies lectures will also resume in the future with the added benefit of live streaming as well as face to face. RB still wishes to produce a calendar of events for the partnership and will request information later when things back to normal. CH commented that the minutes of the last meeting show that as a partnership we have a lot of activity for the long term. SH reported that Amy Cameron had held a Faith and Vicariate Zoom meeting and was developing a whole new strategy on the Word of God and unpacking Scripture. More information to follow once developed. |

3 Sharing what has worked well during closure of churches

| Description | Action / Discussion |
|---|---|
| RB invited everyone to share their experiences of the last 3 months | MP – St Teresa’s had held 14 virtual meetings with various groups and continued to offer food deliveries and telephone support to isolated individuals. Fr Shaun had been in demand. Technology was working well and live streaming of mass making services more accessible to many. RB – had watched the Cathedral services and was amazed at the high number of viewers JR – was delighted that masses were being streamed on You Tube rather than Facebook and had been tuning into Holy Name. CH – Agreed that there was a larger congregation via live streaming and asked how we might encourage these additional people to engage with us and suggested that perhaps a Zoom meeting might be held to find out what they need. |



Cont: Sharing what has worked well during closure of churches

| Description | Action / Discussion |
|---|---|
| RB invited everyone to share their experiences of the last 3 months | <p>JF – Following the movement of Fr Mariadass and the joining with St Mary's shortly before Lockdown, services were going well with scripture in the mornings and a goodnight at the end of the day. A very personal approach.</p> <p>SH – Decided one morning to set up a Facebook group. He streams mass on Sundays with some people saying that they switch off after the bidding prayers as there is no Holy Communion. People may not yet have realised how different things will be in future. He has had positive responses to his reflections on the Word of God. https://www.facebook.com/groups/843692666100080</p> <p>CH – pointed people at The Tablet article about Communion. There would be three live events beginning 16 July 2020</p> <p>MC – Holy Name has been live streaming mass on You Tube since Easter Sunday and the reaction has been excellent with 350 regular live views and up to 700 later. The benefits for parishioners include being able to watch in the comfort of their own home, hassle free, cup of coffee to hand, playback later and with some taking bread and wine at home during Holy Communion. Some people are very wary of returning after many years of attending and may not do so until a vaccine is available. Live streaming is a permanent feature. There has been no demand for re-opening the church. Newsletters sent out regularly to a large audience and published on the web site.</p> <p>SO'N – Since churches has re-opened for private prayer, numbers attending in Consett (60 a day) and Ashington (40 a day) are higher than average with most being fairly low numbers</p> |

4 Clergy view on re-opening churches

| Description | Action / Discussion |
|--|---|
| MC asked clergy to comment on their feelings about re-opening churches | <p>SO'N - said he had been looking at the logistics of re-opening including measures to take in the building and the availability of sufficient stewards. He had been given the opportunity to open for private prayer but in discussion with the stewards had decided to wait a further two weeks to allow for some practise in the new methodology. He also mentioned that he was looking to feed information to the government about the track and trace system.</p> <p>SH – Also looking at the logistics of opening but in no rush. Wants to try out private prayer first and have a Zoom meeting with the Parish Council to seek their views. St Mary's is easier to manage with multiple doors whereas St Aidan's only have one door.</p> <p>RB – reported on behalf of Fr David saying that Wallsend would be open for private prayer from 6 July following training of stewards and a deep clean.</p> <p>Note – the newsletter entry announcing the opening of churches for private prayer is the last page of these minutes.</p> |



5 Non clergy views of reopening churches

| Description | Action / Discussion |
|---|--|
| MC asked lay people for their views on whether or not they would feel comfortable and happy to go back to church. | <p>RB – would go back but had also enjoyed watching live stream mass. Would probably mix and match. Likes the idea of being able to fulfil Sunday obligation on any day of the week as announced by the Bishop.</p> <p>CH – no plans to go anywhere at present as staying at home with elderly parents. Wonders if the new way forward will hasten Ecumenism.</p> <p>DMcG – is being careful but will go back if everything is in place to make it safe, numbers limited, face coverings worn, hand sanitisers in place. Unsure if elderly parishioners would want to return to mass. Likes to ,watch live streaming in comfort of own home.</p> <p>JR – misses the social side of attending mass as well as the singing.</p> <p>JF – asked if it was worth it? So few people able to attend and so much to gain online. Would need to be careful if did attend.</p> <p>BB – when he first started to go, was amazed at realising how many people could impact on his life. Very worried about this but knows we need to get it right so lots of effort initially.</p> <p>SH – many people not following social distancing. Need people to have the right attitude. Priests would need PPE if getting close to people.</p> <p>MP – whatever we have now or bring in will be so different to what we have had. Would aim to get Holy Communion at least once a year if this is the way ahead.</p> <p>MC – recalled growing up in Ireland where it was the norm to receive Holy Communion once a year, usually at Easter. Options going forward could end up with a shorter mass, hosts dropped into the recipients hand and possibly a the end of mass as they leave. Again asked "is it worth it?" We could end up focussing more on the Scriptures and less on Holy Communion.</p> <p>BC – seen an increase in donations, offertory and gift aid donors. Working from home is working well.</p> |

6 Any other business

| Description | Action / Discussion |
|--|--|
| <p>Update from Father David and Rachael</p> <p>Please see page 5 below for full update from Fr David.</p> | <p>RB had taken part in a recent Partnership Chairs Zoom meeting with Amy Cameron and Fr Tuckwell had promoted the use of CARITAS to support parish groups and help them function better. They would not run the group but provide guidance. A short survey about CARITAS will be circulated shortly by BC.</p> <p>The Diocese will be providing resources in different ways in future particularly aimed at those without access to the Internet. Eg becoming a Catholic and prayer resources. Access will be via a telephone number. We can have posters to display. People will be sent packs if they request one.</p> <p>Amy Cameron is asking for writers to send in reflections on the Scriptures for sharing with others.</p> <p>MC thanked SH for his Scripture reflections.</p> <p>Father Hickey who died suddenly on Wednesday was remembered in prayer.</p> |

No plans for a further meeting at present.



JESMOND ST MARY PARTNERSHIP: RE-OPENING OF CHURCHES

Bishop Robert Byrne recently announced that a further 10 churches around the Diocese are to be prepared to re-open for individual prayer only. St Teresa's on Heaton Road (NE6 5HN) is one of these churches. The date for re-opening will be announced soon. We are grateful to Fr Shaun O'Neill and the parishioners of **St Teresa's** for inviting people from across our Partnership to visit their church for individual prayer. The church will be open at these times:

Monday 10.00am – 11.30am
Wednesday 6.00pm – 7.30pm

Fr David, our Partnership Dean, is Parish Priest of **Our Lady and St Columba's Wallsend** which is in the Tynemouth Priory Partnership. Bishop Robert Byrne has requested that Our Lady and St Columba's Wallsend should also be opened for private prayer only. The church will be open at these times:

Tuesday 5.30pm - 7.30pm
Thursday 5.30pm - 7.30pm
Saturday 10.30am to 12.30pm
Sunday 3.00pm – 5.00pm

The Partnership Clergy are grateful to those parishioners who have so generously volunteered to help prepare the churches for re-opening as soon as they have received the Bishop's approval.

What does individual prayer mean under the new restrictions? Individuals are expected to be able to "reflect and pray" whilst adhering to physical social distancing rules. Votive candles may still be lit but shared matches, tapers or lighters must not be used. Candles must be lit from existing lit candles. Statues and relics must not be touched or kissed. This instruction will be displayed on posters in church. Mass and all other public services, including praying together the Divine Office, the Rosary and other group devotional prayers, are still not presently permitted. Further information is available on the diocesan website www.rcdhn.org.uk



Message from Fr David

To all members of the Jesmond St Mary Partnership

Firstly my sincere apologies for not attending the Partnership Zoom meeting on Wednesday 1st July. I had some very unexpected news regarding my mother and had gone to see her. It was while I was there I was given some very sad news regarding her health and her prognosis is not very good. As you can imagine my intention to get back to my presbytery for the Zoom meeting completely went out of my head and I forgot all about it. Once again, apologies for this and I hope my updates that you can see below will help you in some way to see where we are in the current situation regarding the full reopening of churches.

In order to give you an idea of what we can expect regarding the reopening of parishes for private prayer and eventually the celebration of Mass, I think it is best to give you an outline of what has been happening at Our Lady and St Columba's Wallsend

Firstly, I was contacted by Bishop Robert and asked if I would be prepared to open St Columba's in order to give the people of Tynemouth Priory Partnership one church to use for private prayer only within their partnership. I was also told that in no way was I expected to open, if I did not think the time was right, which was very reassuring.

As St Columba's is such a large church I felt it was safe for us to open for private prayer only and so Michael McElroy who is in charge of H&S in our diocese came out to St Columba's to carry out a risk assessment.

Once this was done I recruited 12 volunteer stewards under the age of 65 (though under the age of 70 is permitted so long as they are aware of the risks) who would work in groups of three covering each of the four prayer sessions per week which are as follows:

Tuesday: 5.30pm - 7.30pm;

Thursday: 5.30pm - 7.30pm;

Saturday: 10.30am - 12.30pm;

Sunday: 3.00pm – 5.00pm.

We then set about doing a deep clean of the church followed by laying out a one way system (Floor plan) in order that people could be socially distanced at all times.

We are operating one entrance where a steward will point out a sanitising station and the steward inside the church will direct people to their seats. As we have a large church we are only going to use one side of the building for each session.

This means we have capacity for 28 people on one side of the church with a distance between them of at least 2 metres. This will reduce the need for lots of cleaning. You can see below the floor plan for the church.



Votive candles are not to be in a box or basket like they usually are but need to be laid out separately next to the votive candle stands and then lit from an already lit candle meaning the use of matches or tapers is not allowed. A candle will need to be lit before each prayer session or before mass for people to take a light from.

I have now been asked if I would be willing to open St Columba's for the celebration of Mass. I have agreed we can do this now that we have a committed group of stewards who met this week to go through exactly what will be expected of them. I am also expecting to receive a revised risk assessment which will include extra protocols for the reopening of church for mass. This revised risk assessment was discussed on the phone and will be emailed to me and therefore there is no need for anyone from the Diocesan H&S department to carry out an assessment on site.

Regarding the control of safe numbers, we are setting up a system that will allow people to either phone and book their place to attend Sunday Mass or book it on line. Within the revised risk assessment there are two options for the amount of social distancing that needs to be in place.

Option 1

2 metres between people means we can accommodate 56 people for Mass without the need for face coverings

Option 2

1 metre between people with compulsory use of their own personal face covering that they bring from home.

As of yet I have not had a request to open St Anthony of Padua in Walker for either private prayer or Mass and until I do so I will be working the following system.

All St Anthony of Padua, Walker Masses will take place in St Columba's Church Wallsend.

As Sunday obligation to attend Mass has temporally suspended I will be encouraging people, where they can, to attend for week day mass instead of Sunday. This should not make much difference to people as there will be no hymns on a Sunday anyway.

On the following page is a timetable for all Masses from Sunday 19 July at St Columba's unless there is a dramatic change/increase in number of COVID 19 infections which would result, once again, in lockdown.



Masses in St Columba's

Sunday 9.30am

Sunday 11.00am (Usually at St Anthony's)

Tuesday 7.00pm

Wednesday 10.00am (Usually at St Anthony's)

Thursday 10.00am (Usually at St Anthony's)

Friday 10.00am

I know there has been a great deal of success with the live streaming and pre-recorded Masses and services across our diocese and I think we have all learned a great deal from this. If I could share with you the following?

I have had many emails and cards offering gratitude for all the services and Masses available on line from St Columba's. One in particular, came from a lady whose Father has been housebound for the past 5 years. He had received all of his sacraments throughout his whole life in St Columba's but had not seen inside of the church which has been such an important part of his life for at least 5 years. This time of lockdown has meant he has been able to see all the masses and services in St Columba's which has made a big difference to his life. I don't yet have WIFI in the church which means I pre-record but I fully intend to have WIFI installed in order that I can continue providing the sick and housebound with this facility. That is just one of many similar stories that I am sure you have all learned of within your parishes. This has been very positive and informed us of many who view this as great pastoral care.

I hope this information has been of help. I do have more regarding protocols for reopening for Mass and funerals so please do not hesitate to get in touch if and when you need to.

With all my good wishes,

Fr David Smith