

# Record of Parish Open Forum



## Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May at Sacred Heart

HeartStone

20 People plus Parish Vision Team and Fr Tony attended. Monica took notes. Gina led the meeting by saying the Parish Vision Statement, our Prayer, an invitation for AOB. Fr Tony led a reflection on Scripture.

### ITEM 1: REVIEW OF THE EASTER LITURGY

*How did Lent help you in your faith? How did the Easter Triduum help you?*

1. Lenten preparation was effective with Sharing Scripture included.
2. The Women's Guild retreat day was a wonderful event. Perhaps there could also be one for men next year?

*Maundy Thursday:* opposing views on feet washing – some loved that women were included and we washed each other's feet. It was a very powerful symbol.

*Good Friday:* Loved the cross being displayed afterwards with time to reflect. The evening service is lovely, but not many know about it. Do people like receiving Communion as they reverence the cross? Most people want a book to join in with the responses during the Passion.

*Easter Vigil:* Very emotional, enjoyable receiving people into church and having social time afterwards; Every year one learns more. Some did not like the slides for the 1st reading. Fr Tony apologised for too much levity at communal gathering around the fire with loss of reverence. Some liked starting inside then going out; some felt that was disruptive.

*Easter Sunday :* Sunrise service on beach was fantastic – sun rose on cue

*Reconciliation Service:* Low attendance, was it because people didn't think there were confessions? Has it been communicated badly?

*Passover Meal:* People want to keep it. Some people booked places but didn't come

### ITEM 2: ARCHBISHOP'S REQUEST: FEWER PRIESTS and PEOPLE

#### A. Southport Pastoral Area

**Facts:** November 2014 Pastoral Area Plan launched at Christ King Feast.

January 2015 3 Priests go, 1. Archdiocesan Priest comes.

November 2016 1 Priest goes

April 2017 1 Priest retires

(September 2017 1 Priest replaced by another at Holy Family)

We now have 4 Priests in the Pastoral Area with 8 Churches, 4 Primary Schools, 1 High School (other non-Catholic Further Education colleges), the Hospital, the Hospice, Nursing Homes.

NB: Sunday May 13<sup>th</sup> 5pm, 1<sup>st</sup> time no mass but Liturgy of Word as no Priest available.

#### **Dean's initiatives already begun:**

1. More support for Priests together, e.g. meet for meals periodically.
2. Support each other in music ministry across the Parishes
3. Review and develop Charitable service across the Pastoral Area

#### **Archbishop's Request: Core Principles from the Document:**

- The importance of "being called to community in the Church"; what are realistic expectations of priests & people?
- Support priests as they balance many areas. Take account of individual capacities
- Primary task: celebrating Sunday well, so the faithful deepen their sense of being the Church throughout their daily lives
- Change is opportunity for deeper the partnership of priests, deacons and lay people. Deans are key to this, with help of the Diocese.
- Focus on mission to go out and share our faith, through witness & generous service.

#### **Archbishop's Request: Feedback from the people:**

- Encourage Southport Catholics to see all Priests as "our Priests": how to do this? e.g. meet regularly, concelebrate occasionally, attend neighbouring parish events, rotate saying mass at neighbouring churches (in eventuality of not having mass in every church every Sunday, priests are then known)
- Could permanent deacons progress to become Priests?
- Ordain women as deacons, ensure Diaconate does not inhibit lay ministry development
- Dispense with evening mass on Friday/Saturday/Sunday in HeartStone.
- We are not against married priests or asking priests who have married to return to ministry.
- We are the church – the people have Holy Spirit-given gifts, they should be used more.
- Parents bring children to sacraments but don't carry on attending mass, how do we change this? Family activities (football, Rainbows, other sports) more attractive than Sunday mass. This and other factors affect Sunday obligation inheritance.
- Parishioners travel together to Mass at other churches (car-sharing).
- Train lay people to carry out more services (funerals, baptisms, word & communion)
- Training, facilitation and accountability of leaders
- At Diocesan level we must do more to resource, train and support the hardworking volunteers in parishes, because we are overbalanced in resourcing only clergy.
- Continue discussions like this, in Parish Forums & have a Pastoral Area Forum, plus an Archdiocesan Assembly (perhaps every 2 years).

Written contributions were shared:

1. Fewer at mass because Catholic schools were closed too quickly.
2. Recommend one Chapel of Perpetual Adoration in Southport for prayer for improved Mission.

**Fr Tony recommended:** that the Diocese provide more adequate training for Leadership and its skills for Priests and parish leaders. Priests and lay ministers working together as teams in Pastoral Areas requires as a necessity trained facilitation from the Diocese. We must clarify how decisions are made in Pastoral Areas with more transparency.

## **B: HeartStone**

**Anne** gave update on Living Christ Retreat (proposed for 8/9<sup>th</sup> September at SJS)

**Clare** gave update on Welcoming Missionary Priority, the next Joint Mass is for Sacred Heart feast day at SH, 10am on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June, with a meeting at 7pm on 1<sup>st</sup> June in SH church.

**Fr Tony** announced a **review of the Parish Vision** after its first year from Pentecost 2016: discussion now, feedback from people verbally, by letter or by email to the Parish Office and

**Gina** introduced the Listening Process and invites anyone to have a 1-2-1 conversation with Parish Listeners: past listeners & new volunteers welcome to have training on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May at 10am at SJS or Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm at SH

### **Parish Vision: Feedback from the people:**

How much better it is since the Archdiocesan priest has arrived – more Forums more chatting, it's like a feast after a famine. People loved the joint masses. It used to be "them and us" now it's more together, but there was already some good communication between the 2 parishes, and Church Teams met regularly.

The invitation calling for help with Welcoming needed more clarification, about expectations and what they would need to do.

Members of Vision Team should go to the Hospitality after masses to share conversations/ invite people to come along and do things in a relaxed atmosphere.

Trying to get new volunteers is an ongoing problem. People are afraid to volunteer as then there's no escape. Assure people they aren't committing themselves for life. Split commitment into smaller tasks (e.g. removing statues before Easter).

**Fr Tony** thought that the development of lay ministry and spirituality is the crucial aspect for the future: June 18<sup>th</sup> is re-commitment to ministry and invitation to develop additional training to lay ministry and formation to come in September. Please God this will be true across the whole Pastoral Area.

**We discussed mass times:** from November 2014 Sunday evening and Saturday evening masses have reduced. From January 2015 weekday masses are now 1 between the 2 churches.

### **Mass Times: Feedback from the people:**

People felt we had "done our bit" by reducing Saturday and Sunday evening masses. Discussion about reducing mass times during summer holidays (as it is more and more difficult to get priests to cover) resulted in advice that when PP away it is a good idea.

Fr Tony announced he has decided to stop Friday evening mass (except for the Our Lady's Guild mass which is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of month).

## **C: The West Coast**

This is an experiment (inspired by God?), to see how we can share initiatives on the West Coast of the Archdiocese to find fresh ways for the faith to flourish. Invitations have gone out to Pastoral Areas, people and Catholic organisations to join in this discernment on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April at St Joseph's Freshfield. Perhaps use the first Friday monthly mass there as a continuing support/focus for Mission?

### **ITEM 3: MENTAL HEALTH**

We discussed the progress in the Ecumenical Partnership with MerseyCare, and the document "**Friendly Places**". We are already working well, and we have begun doing some of the things listed on the handout. Declan has given great service and we are growing our understanding of Mental Health, raising awareness and challenging stigma. We will embed safeguarding into this, with our "HeartStone Wellbeing Team", including Gerard and Jennifer. Declan thinks we are well on the way to being a Friendly Place, but the Dementia training has been poorly attended. People don't realise how many will be affected. We have been asked whether the Parish endorses their committed to being a Friendly Place. Fr T asked if he has the meetings support to sign up to the "Friendly Places". This commitment was unanimously passed.

### **ITEM 4: ECUMENICAL PLANS**

To celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ecumenical Covenant different denominational ministers will preach the sermons at SH and SJS at Pentecost, and Fr Tony will preach at other denominations.

HeartStone is responsible for this year's Tent Service at the Ainsdale Show. Planning meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> May 7pm for how we celebrate the service. Octave are involved.

Ministers in Ainsdale had a wonderful study day together, we are writing to the Bishop about our plans to celebrate the unity of CTiA on the feast of "All Saints"

### **Youth Ministry**

Youth Minister, Melissa, was here for a year. SCY didn't really take off in HeartStone. Ministers of CTiA won't continue with the contract with PACE, but have decided as an Ecumenical Covenant to use part of a time of a youth worker employed by Methodists in Birkdale and pay for some hours to develop youth ministry in Ainsdale; developing faith in the young people of Ainsdale.

Fr Tony asks for support to contribute to this development worker, as a 3-year contract. £1000 per year. For ages year 6 up to 5<sup>th</sup> year of High School. This presents a planning challenge for the different age groups. Other Ainsdale churches are willing to contribute £1500-£2000. This isn't necessarily only about young people becoming Catholic, rather young people coming to faith. A HeartStone contribution of £1000 was endorsed (the higher figures were rejected).

**Date of next Parish Open Forum: 27<sup>th</sup> July**

Time and place to be advertised