

Matters for our parish

At our parish-wide meeting on 6th February at Douai, Fr Gabriel reminded us that some of the issues arising from our synodal discernment process will need to be addressed at parish level as well as, or instead of, at the diocesan level. **The views expressed at our meetings are listed here** (mostly in note form for ease of reference), so that, when time and opportunity allow, we can all begin to reflect with Fr Gabriel on how best to take them forward. We should recognise that not everything desirable can be done at once.

Sharing responsibilities and decision-making between priest and ‘people’

- Establish with Fr Gabriel a successor to the PPC as a matter of priority, perhaps developing a more diverse cohort of members than before.
- Consider its remit, and how best this and all church committees can develop and sustain a greater spirit of discernment and synodality, so that all members’ views are heard.
- Develop a culture of consultation and shared leadership generally within the parish and diocese.

Parish life as a community

- Steps to sustain a sense of community and develop more inclusiveness within the parish.
- Inclusiveness should be one of the criteria by which we assess all our customs and proposed initiatives within the parish.
- Steps to involve the housebound and those unable to get to services and events.
- Cross-vocational friendships of trust.
- House Masses.
- Coffee after Mass, and other regular opportunities for socialising, provided it is safe to do so (because of the likelihood of an ongoing and necessary Covid security).

Young people

- We need to go out of our way to welcome and engage young people in parish life.
- Consider setting up a small group (perhaps building on the group of youngsters who met at St Bernadette’s on 30 January) to discuss ideas and organise events, including liturgies.
- Make sure young people play as full a role as possible in weekly liturgies, including serving, readings, bidding prayers, music.
- Consider focusing homilies on young people from time to time, and/or perhaps inviting outsiders to speak.
- Provide opportunities for regular spiritual enrichment of our younger as well as older members.
- Encourage the development of a social component of parish life for young people, to provide mutual support for personal faith and its growth. A social component is important for like-minded people of faith.

Deepening our spiritual lives

- Consider what we can do to support and encourage ongoing adult and young adult formation, both within our own parish (including the Abbey congregation) and with other local Christian groups within the diocese.

Liturgy

- The spiritual resources of the monastic community are a great asset – for celebrating liturgies, and also for retreats, talks, study, spiritual guidance, etc. We appreciate being informed about and invited to these events via modern media and in time to plan for them.
- More teaching about the liturgy would be welcomed.
- Restore invitations to the sign of peace, perhaps stressing non-contact ways of doing so. Restore reconciliation services, suitably spaced, for the future.
- Taking communion to the housebound and sick is greatly appreciated by the parishioners who enjoy the regular social and spiritual support. Keep their names in front of the relevant congregations.
- Promote house Masses when circumstances allow.
- Explore and consult about the scope for greater variety in our liturgy: more experiment, services designed for particular groups (young, etc), a wider involvement in planning and delivering (not just the usual suspects!), a greater diversity of music and musicians (where available) in each of our church communities across the parish.

Lay ministries

- We have a range of lay ministries already: e.g. sacramental preparation and communion for the housebound, as well as those associated with liturgy. Could any other roles be delegated in the same way?

Outreach

- Ways to develop and sustain more involvement, as a parish, in local affairs.
- Collaborate more with other local churches in our neighbourhood – e.g. by (but not only) All Churches Together.
- Continuing fundraising campaigns to raise our own awareness of issues and to build community through a series of social events aimed at generating funds (especially when we can safely manage Covid risks). These events also bring outsiders to our events.

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