

○ **(Draft) North West Edinburgh Cluster Report for Archbishop Leo Cushley**

This proposed cluster comprises:

- St. John the Baptist RC Church, Corstorphine
- St Kentigern's RC Church, Barnton
- St. Margaret's RC Church , Davidsons Mains
- St. Margaret's RC Church, South Queensferry
- St. Mary's RC Church, Ratho

The Archbishop met with parishioners from these parishes in St Kentigern's Church on January 30th 2016. Following this, despite having no previous working links **as a cluster**, three successful, well-attended Cluster Planning Team (CPT) meetings were held, with excellent participation from each Church. The meetings were scheduled as follows:

- St Kentigern's acted as host on June 18th 2016
- St Margaret's (Davidsons Mains) hosted September 17th 2016
- St John the Baptist Church hosted November 12th 2016

Historically, there have been some links with St John the Baptist and St Kentigern's Churches sharing a Priest. St. Margaret's, South Queensferry and St. Mary's, Ratho are currently linked and share a Priest. In addition, St Margaret's Church in South Queensferry, was previously for many years, linked with St Philomena's Church in Winchburgh. For many parishioners from St Margaret's this is still in fact where they attend Holy Mass should they be unable to attend in South Queensferry, due to geographical proximity. It should be noted there are no good reliable public transport links from South Queensferry to any of the proposed cluster parishes and this is a potential barrier for those who do not have their own transport, those on a fixed/low income particularly the elderly, or those with young children.

St Margaret's Church in Davidson's Mains was linked with St. Paul's Muirhouse, which closed in 2014, with St Margaret's now responsible for that pastoral area. St Mary's Ratho was in past linked to Currie and Balerno.

People of all parishes are open to the process of closer collaboration in the future.

The following is a discerned representation of the views of the cluster parishes pertaining to what should be done together in pastoral provision and what should continue to be focused on single parish provision as recorded from the first meeting:

Liturgy

For the last two years Confirmations, celebrated by Archbishop Cushley have taken place centrally within the proposed Cluster of parishes. It was noted, however, that there have been a number of joint initiatives and services which could be a model for the future :

- Sacramental Preparation (St Mary's/St Margaret's SQ)

- Penitential Services (St Kentigern's/St Margaret's D'Mains/St John the Baptist)
- RCIA (St Kentigern's/St John the Baptist)
- Mass for the Sick (St Kentigern's/St John the Baptist)

Mass Scheduling: Mass Scheduling could be better balanced. Four of the parishes have Vigil Masses (albeit St Mary's don't have a Sunday morning Mass) but there is no Sunday evening Mass. The Masses also tend to be around a similar time frame, limiting options across the cluster.

Training for Lay People for Service: There is none within the cluster, but it is required. Gillis could be more proactive in this regard and laity within parishes, with particular skills, should be encouraged to share their gifts and experiences across the cluster. The relative lack of children and young adults is also a concern. We need to encourage and promote initiatives for children and families and the youth in our parishes.

Community:

- Fox Covert RC Primary School served by St Kentigern's and St John's
- St Margaret's RC Primary School SQ served by St Margaret's South Queensferry
- St David's RC Primary School is served by St Margaret's Davidsons Mains and also serves children from the neighbouring St Paul's (now closed) catchment area
- Youth Groups (St Kentigern's/St John's), but disbanded earlier this year.

There was CONSENSUS that better Communication between parishes and within parishes is vital. We know very little about what is going on in our respective parishes (and sometimes our own). We should make better use of the media - parish newsletters, web pages and Facebook – perhaps have a periodic cluster spot in the newsletter or a cluster page on the web, to inform of each other's activities.

Single Parish Provision:

There was CONSENSUS that we retain our Church buildings and retain our community. A Parish Sunday Mass was essential and pivotal to maintaining a parish community, with shared priests visiting if required. Weekday Masses could be by rotation. Weekday services, could if necessity required, be taken by the Laity, (as happens in some of the parishes) and training could be offered where appropriate. Concerns were raised that if a parish closed down how would the people without transport (particularly the elderly) be able to attend Sunday Mass. Would there be a bus supplied?

Individual parishes may have differing perspectives but there are many things to share and we should make use of facilities and the human resources available within the cluster.

There is an understanding that we may all have to make sacrifices, but a clear vision was necessary to move forward.

The third meeting considered the vibrancy of the cluster parishes under the headings of: Eucharist, Evangelisation, Catechesis, and Stewardship.

The Eucharist is the centre and literally the lifeblood and beating heart of our Faith. Without this fountain of sacramental grace we are truly lost. We therefore owe a debt of gratitude to our priests who celebrate Holy Mass for us on a daily basis in most of the cluster parishes. **The Eucharist is the source of vibrancy of all parishes.**

There were many signs of vibrancy as evidenced by the numerous groups noted under the heading of Evangelisation within the cluster. The SVDP was represented in all parishes. Other groups included: Youth for Lourdes, Pro-Life, Food Bank, Community Lunch and parish projects such as Mary's Meals and Bethany Cooking. The majority of parishes provided tea/coffee after Sunday Mass and also after one weekday Mass promoting a welcoming atmosphere.

Similarly, across the cluster, there was further evidence of vibrancy in the wide range of groups involved in Catechesis. This included: Children's Liturgy, Sunday Instruction (for Catholic children who attend non denominational schools), Liturgy, SPRED, RCIA, Scripture Group, Music Group and Choir.

Finally, in terms of Stewardship, there are active Parish Pastoral Councils, supporting and assisting the Parish Priest, in all but one of the cluster parishes.

In summary, in addition to all of the above, it was felt that doing the following well were the key indicators of vibrancy within the current parish structure, which may lead to new growth and life:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for newcomers and visitors across a good mix of age groups both young and old.
- Active involvement of all age groups across ministries at Sunday Mass plus the involvement of the schools.
- Tea, coffee and fellowship after Masses and services

The final meeting also listed the following pastoral goals for the cluster to work on together in a spirit of mission and evangelization:

1. Create a more joined up sense of cluster in our Eucharistic celebrations, our outreach and our social activities, with a greater awareness for parishioners of what happens across the cluster. Improve communication across all parishes, with a cluster section in all parish websites and newsletters similar to St Kentigern's and St Margaret's, Davidsons Mains. The following goals were suggested as things that we can achieve within the cluster:
 - Don't reinvent the wheel. Look at what other clusters are doing e.g. South Edinburgh and Livingston.
 - Create a joint vision for the cluster, with a cluster name, that we can all use and refer to.
 - Try and ensure a daily Mass available across the cluster if shortage of Priests does not allow individual Parish Provision. Communicate Mass times across the cluster.

- Coordinate Mass times for Vigil/Sunday and Holyday of Obligation across the cluster, and ideally arrange transport for those that require it.
- Create cluster sections in newsletters and websites advertising Mass times across the clusters, as well as parish and catholic school social events.
- Investigate how we can use social media, ideally looking for some young people from the cluster to work with the Diocese social media team to create a social media presence for the cluster
- Parish Pastoral Councils to meet as a cluster, once or twice a year, to ensure the above aims are looked at further, built into a future vision if appropriate and to facilitate cluster social activities.

2. Create a coordinated approach to Youth activities. Primary school children need opportunities to meet and bond with fellow Catholics of the cluster, before they move to High School whether Catholic or non-denominational. High School pupils, who are practising Catholics need opportunities to socialise with their peers who are practising Catholics. (The young person who raised this point attends a Catholic High School and estimates that within their S2 form class only one in six classmates who are baptised Catholics attend Sunday Mass. The church community needs to lend support to our youth who do practise). It was agreed that this is difficult to achieve but the following aims were proposed:

- Evaluate the option of creating a Sunday evening Mass in the cluster (even on a rotational basis). It was felt that this might produce a better option for younger parishioners who may have sporting activities on a Sunday morning, or just need a lie in after the night before. This could be tried initially on a trial basis
- Establish some social activities for young parishioners after a Sunday evening Mass, perhaps labelled as 'Faith in Action' rather than 'Youth Group!'
- Encourage the involvement of more young people in ministries within the church e.g. as pass keepers, readers, members of Parish Pastoral Council. Also could we have children or families leading at Holy Mass e.g. doing readings, bidding prayers etc.
- Establish more links with cluster Catholic schools e.g. via Caritas
- Raise the issue with the Diocese about moving the Sacrament of Confirmation to P7 again or even early teens. It was felt that having Confirmation, immediately after reception of their First Holy Communion means that many children lose contact with the church shortly after this in P4.

3. Create a sense of ministry for all. It was accepted, that to achieve the above, we need people. Everyone has a part to play in our parishes and in our clusters, and everyone has unique skills and strengths. This may be difficult, but it is something we should strive for aiming to:

- Provide opportunity and encouragement to everyone to have a ministry in the church.

In conclusion, the people of the cluster parishes have throughout the consultation demonstrated a spirit of co-operation. This is already fostering greater collaboration between the parishes of the cluster, for future forward planning, whether spiritual or social. It is hoped that the priests within the cluster parishes will be free to help each other as well as parishioners of the cluster.

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