

St John the Baptist, Corstorphine

Saturday 12th November

Minutes

The third meeting of the Cluster parishes of St John the Baptist, St Kentigern's, St Margaret's (Davidson Mains), St Margaret's (Queensferry) and St Mary's (Ratho) was held in the St John the Baptist Church hall on 12th November.

It was chaired by the St John the Baptist PPC and was attended by over 50 parishioners of the cluster parishes with all parish priests in attendance apart from Father Kelly from St Margaret's (Davidson Mains).

After introductions from the chair. Father Martin opened the meeting in prayer and read the reading from the 'Cluster Parishes Together workbook'. After a short reflection from Father Martin, the group split into 4 sub-groups to consider the questions in the workbook.

- What does the study reveal about indicators of vibrancy in our parish ?
- What are the possible future joint actions in our cluster parishes ? What aims or joint goals could emerge.

Each question was considered in turn, with the groups initially considering what currently makes our parishes vibrant, or not ?

To facilitate this discussion the St John the Baptist PPC had created a spreadsheet providing an initial view of parish life across the cluster. This spreadsheet was structured around the headings within the workbook, Eucharist, Evangelisation, Leadership, Catechesis, Outreach and Stewardship. This enabled everyone to see what we do currently within our parishes and reflect on the three things that are important to make parish life vibrant.

In summary the groups felt that doing the following well was indicators of vibrancy within the current parish structure :

1. Welcoming atmosphere particularly for newcomers and visitors. A good mix of age groups, young and old.
2. Active involvement of all age groups across ministries at Sunday Mass. Also involvement of schools.
3. Tea, coffee and fellowship after Masses and services.

This discussion also allowed us to update the spreadsheet with more accurate information from those in attendance. This updated spreadsheet is attached to these minutes.

The second part of the meeting then considered what we can do together, as a cluster, going forward.

The result was the following :

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. Achieved initially by better communication across all parishes, modelled on the work that St Kentigerns have already started with a cluster section in their website and newsletters. (It has since been noted that St Margarets (DM) has similar.) The following aims were suggested as things that we can achieve within the cluster -
 - Aim - Don't reinvent the wheel, look at what other clusters are doing e.g. South Edinburgh and Livingston
 - Aim - Create a joint vision for the cluster, with a cluster name, that we can all use and refer to
 - Aim - Try and ensure a daily mass across the cluster that is known to all
 - Aim - Coordinate mass times, weekly and holiday of obligations across the cluster, and ideally arrange transport for those that require it
 - Aim - Create cluster sections in newsletters and websites advertising mass times across the clusters, as well as parish and catholic school social events

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- Aim - Look at 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
 - Aim - Parish PPCs 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 facilitate cluster social activities
2. Create a coordinated approach to Youth activities. Primary school children need opportunities to meet and bond with fellow Catholics before they move to the more secular High Schools. High School pupils need opportunities to socialise with fellow Catholics. It was agreed that this is difficult to achieve but the following suggestions were made -
- Aim - look at the option of creating a Sunday night mass in the cluster (even on a rota basis), where it was felt that this might produce a better option for younger parishioners who may have sporting activities on a Sunday morning, or just needing a lie in after the night before. This could be tried initially on a trial basis
 - Aim - look for some social activities to be established after a Sunday night mass. And perhaps labelled as 'Faith in Action' rather than youth group !
 - Aim - look to involve more young people in ministries within the church e.g. passkeepers, readers, ppc. Also could we have children or families leading a mass e.g. doing readings, bidding prayers etc
 - Aim - look to establish more links to schools e.g. via Caritas
 - Aim - raise the issue with the diocese about moving confirmation to P7 again or even early teens. It was felt that moving it to be done alongside communion means that many children lose contact with the church after their first holy communion
3. Create a sense of ministry for all. It was recognised 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. Again it was recognised the difficulty with this but it is something we should strive for
- Aim - everyone to have the opportunity, and be encouraged, to have a ministry in the church

Father James Tracey from St Kentigern's then informed us that the next stage of the process would be the formation of a writing group, made up of himself and a representative from each parish. This group, on receipt of a report template from the archdiocese, would complete a draft report formed from the minutes of the 3 cluster meetings. This draft would then be circulated to the parishes for review and comment, before being returned to the Archbishop by Easter 2017.

The Archbishop would then consider and announce the way forward.

A volunteer was then sought from each parish to assist Father Tracey with this report. The following parishioners agreed.

- Mark Kernberg - St John the Baptist
- Ian Starkey - St Kentigern's
- Ann Terms - St Margaret's (DM)
- TBC - St Margarets (Q)
- Mike Casey - St Mary

Finally, after thanking everyone for their attendance and their contribution to the discussion Father Scott Deeley closed in prayer.