

CHRIST THE PRINCE OF PEACE, WEYBRIDGE

Annual Meeting of the Parish 9th May 2010

Father Tom opened the meeting with prayer.

About 45-50 people were present.

Carmen Ferran welcomed parishioners to the meeting.

She said the last year had been very exciting for the parish and mentioned a few events:

The celebration of 20 years of liturgies

The number of Confirmation candidates in the deanery caused a crisis of accommodation. Our Bishop very kindly saved the day by celebrating another Mass.

A new electronic bell has just been installed which will carry the sound of our liturgies to those in the immediate area.

The sound system has been greatly enhanced which is appreciated by all.

Last but by no means least, we have a Godsend in Gerard. His presence in our parish has surpassed any expectation!

Treasurer's Report given by Brian Mepham in the absence of Elaine Dunne:

A copy of the accounts is attached.

There was an overall loss of £16k for the year against the budgeted loss of £40k.

Key factors included - No legacies, large donations or gifts were received during the year.

- From our total parish income of £182+, we have to pay the Diocese £49k. This amount is based on a percentage of the aggregated parish income over 3 years.
- Tax refunds remain reasonably strong at £25k. This will reduce owing, among other considerations to a reduction in the offertory collection.
- The most secure way to sustain the collection is with regular giving by standing orders and more are needed. There was a very successful planned giving campaign 6 years ago and another one is planned for the autumn.
- Total expenditure was £152k, approximately £9k lower than the budget and broadly in line with the previous year. The main cost drivers are salaries and wages, ongoing repairs and maintenance with establishment costs (utilities, insurance, etc)
- Repair and maintenance amounted to £37k and with the buildings now 20 years old, it is to be expected that this will continue. The Reserve fund seems high but it is necessary to keep it at this level to cope with any serious unforeseen problems, and it is not too high for the size of the complex.
- On the balance sheet cash and bank balances remain strong at £224k approx, although lower than the previous year. The balance in the general account amounts to £83,969 as compared to £99,911 for the comparative period.
- Going forward we have a prudent budget and we are projecting a deficit in the region of £16,000 This takes into consideration the following impacts based on the economic situation; falling offertory income and falling interest rates, which are not within our control, with level of income thereby reduced.
- It is important to maintain tight control over costs to ensure we can cope with any adverse variations to our income stream. It is not prudent to have a yearly deficit of £16,000.

A query was raised about the deficit and Mr. Mepham said there were few areas to cut costs. He said the Diocese has a contract for gas and we are included in that contract.

It was suggested that the parish ask a gas/electrical consultant to advise us on the ways we use these utilities. The suggestion was noted for consideration.

REPORTS

Adult Formation given by Barbara Simon:

Our responsibilities as parish adult formation team are:

- Guided prayer
- Parish retreats
- Parish pilgrimages
- Education talks

We've had a busy year!

A. High lights of the year

1. Talks

- An introduction to understanding Islam by Dr. Chris Hewer (16/10/09)
- Icons by Mr. Stephane Rene (23/10/09) organised in anticipation of the unveiling of the parish icon by Bishop Kieron
- The Café course in May and June 2009 was very well organised, but not as well supported as we had hoped for. The feedback was that it fell between two stools – for committed Catholics they would have liked a deeper exploration of their faith, and yet it did not attract the targeted group of younger parishioners with children.

2. Parish pilgrimages

- Day pilgrimage to St. Theresa's relics at Aylesford with 2 coaches from the Weybridge deanery
- St. Giovanni Rotondo in Italy 17-21 May 2010, the birthplace of St. Padre Pio is a fitting choice for the year of the priest

3. Parish retreat

- Day of recollection for Lent led by Fr John Dickson

4. Guided Prayer

- We have been encouraging our parishioners to join ecumenical groups in Lent as part of Churches Together

B. Future Developments

- Following the success of Dr. Hewer's talk on Islam, we are hoping to have speakers talking about other religions, for example Rabbi Jackie Tabick on Judaism.
- National Holocaust Memorial Day 2011: We are privileged to be hosting the first one outside of the synagogue. The team recently met to begin planning the event.
- The Adult Information Team, founded by Fr. Benny O'Shea, has looked at its original vision statement and updated it. It was satisfying to see that the groups who have sprung up since his time have been trying to fulfil his vision. We conducted our reflection in a spirit of prayer, and I would like to finish with Fr. Tom's words:

“I see our task as trying to ensure that we as a parish provide opportunities for everyone to grow in their faith and spiritual life. This is not a matter of filling gaps. We must always keep in mind that the Church exists not just for itself, but for the world. This sense of mission should inspire all our thinking and planning.”

Catechetics given by Veronica Robbins:

1. I was appointed Catechetical Co-ordinator for the parish by Fr. Tom when he arrived in the parish.
2. The Second Vatican Council ordered a General Directory for Catechesis
 - Adult Catechesis is to be priority (No 253)
 - Catechesis is the responsibility of the entire Christian community (No220)

- Catechesis is to be Bible/Lectionary based out of which arises our doctrine
- As a result, even in the children's programmes, the adults are our priority. Very often they have not received any further knowledge of their faith since leaving school
- Our parish catechetical programmes can be divided into two parts
 - sacramental
 - non-sacramental

Sacramental

1. Marriage Preparation: have changed from four evenings to a full Saturday finding it more productive
2. Adult RCIA (Journey in Faith): numbers are fewer – why? One candidate for Confirmation last Easter, three preparing at the moment (two received their Bibles on 8th May and the other in February) and one new person to join this coming week. People are first interviewed at home.
3. Junior RCIA: numbers larger than before, five were baptised on Easter Sunday morning after a six month programme in which parents also attend the sessions. Parents were first interviewed at home.
4. Confirmation: Adrienne Dines is the co-ordinator. They had a very successful Away Day at Worth to start the process. Adrienne divided the year into two parts – What the Church does for them and What they can do for the Church. As a result 11 of them are to be red shirts at Lourdes this year.
5. First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion: This is the third year of involving the parents. What was new and a great success this year was that the last 15 minutes each week finished in the church where parents and children join together in worship and teaching.
6. Baptism: We would like to thank Sister Mary, Louise and Stephanie for the many, many years they have run the programme. They feel they would like a rest! Paul Gately (our parishioner who is training to become our parish deacon) and Gerard Hatton (our seminarian who is to be ordained deacon this summer) are creating a new programme. The hope is to get a team of parents to run the sessions, after the parents have first been interviewed at home.
7. Children's Liturgy: This seems to be a great success as 85 children attended one Sunday.

Non-sacramental:

1. Returning Catholics: As a result of last summers' course, a group of seven returning Catholics asked if they could meet as a group. They follow a similar process to RCIA meeting once a month and giving them opportunity to ask questions. They feel they are in need of a break, but hope to re-launch the programme next spring with an appeal for new members.
2. Adult Catechesis for the Parish: There are many adults who are not involved in sacrament preparation but do like to further their biblical and church doctrine knowledge. As a result we have invited someone each year to lead our Study Day. Last November, Fr Nick King SJ gave us a day on Luke's Gospel. 76 people attended. This coming October 30th, Fr Adrian Graffey will give us a day on Matthew's Gospel.

Catechist Formation

1. In the Directory, it states "The Bishop has to ensure that catechists are adequately prepared for their tasks." (No223) And so the diocese and our parish have a variety of training days in order for us all to keep up to date.
2. This coming September, we are very lucky to have Suzanne Kowal, the leader of Catechesis for the Plymouth diocese coming on Thursday 9th September. Everyone in the parish is welcome to join us. This will be followed by the commissioning of all catechists on the following Sunday at the 10.30 Mass.
3. On 19th June there is a day at Crawley for training those involved in children's liturgy.
4. From 30th June until 2nd July there is a residential National Conference in Manchester run by Fr Martin Jakubus, one of our own diocesan priests on RCIA.
5. Fr. Martin Jakubus will also be running a day for RCIA catechists in our diocese on 11th September at Crawley.
6. First Holy Communion Catechists have their Day on 10th July at Crawley.

Following a query, Veronica explained that The National Liturgy Committee hope that the new missal will be brought into the parishes in Advent 2011, after the priests have been prepared.

Marriage and Family Life given by Brian Watt:

As already mentioned the marriage preparation course is now held on one full Saturday as this is easier for couples to attend rather than separate evenings. It also takes the form more of a dialogue, looking from all angles, men and women and family.

The bi-monthly anniversary Masses are continuing and couples married during the previous year are also invited.

Justice and Peace given by Mary Lee

On behalf of our Justice and Peace Group I would like to thank the Parish for their ongoing support of all our group's efforts to help Charity groups outside our local community over the past year.

One of these has been the Gatwick Detainees based in Sussex. We have had regular collections of much needed toiletries for genuine refugees and their families.

Secondly, we have helped the homeless Charity in London, The Passage. There have been two collections of warm clothes and sleeping bags and very generous cash donations of several hundred pounds from our parishioners which enabled thermal underwear to be bought, which was used last winter.

Thank you to our 40 collectors from our parish taking part in the Christian Aid collection during the week 10th – 16th May.

We are a Fairtrade Diocese, Parish and School and we have linked up with other Just & Peace groups to promote Fairtrade in Elmbridge by distributing Fairtrade literature outside our local Tesco and Marks & Spencer stores. Our school promoted Fairtrade in their Assembly and made two wonderful Fairtrade Banners for Parish use in the future.

Our ongoing commitment to Cafod and other overseas Charities saw us raise \$2400 this Lent from our Cafod and Charity lunches.

As a group we have been lobbying Cafod, with other parishes in our diocese to ask them to cut down on their extravagant use of mail sent to parish offices and their supporters. They have now taken this on board and are reducing and condensing their output of paper mail.

Looking ahead we are pleased to welcome the diocesan Justice & Peace representative, David Thomas, and the Cafod representative Martin Brown, to our next meeting in June to discuss how we can promote effectively 50 years of Cafod.

We would like to expand our work by raising more awareness of our local Send prison and the work of the Chaplaincy team, raising awareness of how local companies can help integrate ex-offenders back working in the community.

Lastly, we are pleased to welcome Richard Matthewson as a new member of our group and we hope to promote his own involvement with the Cardinal Hume Centre in London.

Mission and Unity given by Joan Cowper

Our parish ecumenical effort is mainly via Churches Together in Weybridge. This has a Forum of some 20 people, representing 6 church communities. We meet for 9 hours per year, in 6 bi-monthly meetings so what we can achieve is limited. We aim to focus on a short programme of events. Some of these, individual member churches may organise in turn (a bit Churches Together separately!).

And all agree to support them.

Our parish participation in Churches Together is significant. Currently, Fr. Tom, and I are joint chair; Peter Clapham is just standing down, having made a massive contribution to all the work in addition to being Treasurer, parish representative and publicity manager for Christmas and Easter services. Mary Lee has done a huge amount to help in ways too numerous to mention.

Highlights:-

1. In the forum, we acknowledged the need, and have specifically prayed, that we our-selves, as individuals, might come closer together. Before the January Meeting we had a shared meal and discussed how to try to work more cooperatively. Since then, we have made progress.
2. Our programme to date has run well: the lively **Christian Unity Service** was prepared by Wey Christian Fellowship; the **Walk of Witness on Good Friday**, organised by Christ the Prince of Peace impressive and well supported;

3. **Ecumenical Lent groups** were enjoyed by participants – though sadly, numbers were down, probably partly an effect of the one-off and again successful **Lent Talks** held at St. James – we contributed much to the **Women’s World Day of Prayer**, also organised and at St. James, with St. Charles School singing beautifully and young mums from that Prayer group doing the readings. The recent **election hustings** here were excellently organised by a highly competent team led by Mark Diekmann.
4. Following the success last June, plans are well in hand for the next Churches Together Picnic in the Park at Churchfield Park on Sunday 20th June. Put it in your diary – and bring family and friends. It is a relaxed enjoyable occasion with live music – and no commercial aspect at all – just a collection for Sam Beare Hospice.

Developments:-

For the future it would be wonderful if our communities could somehow nudge a little closer together as we move on the path towards unity. We are now drawing up plans for 2011. We will try to be more truly ‘Churches **Together**’ in the way we organise those events.

One thing is clear. We need more help if we are to be more effective. For instance, Weybridge Old Folks Club which Churches Together supports is desperately in need of admin. support; Churches Together would be blessed if we could find help with publicity; we’d love to have a list of volunteers to call on when preparing individual events during the year. So, to conclude, if you have any interest, please let me know.

Father Tom’s thoughts

Father Tom said he thought all the reports were excellent.

He thanked Jan and Mary for all their hard work and said they were such an asset in the office and a great help to Gerard and himself.

Reflecting on the church’s situation in England and Wales it was like the disciples on Holy Saturday – the threshold of Easter reflecting on our parish, not that we have been through the darkness and sorrow, but that we are on the threshold of something new.

Father said there were four areas upon which he wished to comment.

1. The Pastoral Team had been soul searching and Father felt that sometimes the reports at meetings were a repeat of what we had done, and now is a time for vision and for reaching out. We need to be welcoming – for example baptisms which involve young couples – expanding, the real sign of a new beginning.
Father thanked Carmen for leading the team and is very grateful to her for agreeing to stay as chairman for another year. Paul Gately will be joining the Pastoral Team and after he is ordained a Deacon next year, he is willing to take over as chairman.
Gerard will be ordained a Deacon next month and Father Tom is delighted that he will be coming back to the parish for another year.
2. Churches Together in Weybridge is on threshold of a breakthrough and Joan Cowper has been the driving force behind the revival because numbers were dropping and people were quite apathetic and reluctant co-operators but now they are much more committed. One of St. James’s parishioners, Mike Power, has been accepted for formation to the priesthood. Fr Tom, Joan and her husband were among a small number of local people invited to the vicarage for a celebration meal and this was really very moving and encouraging.
These signs that are just the threshold of a new dawn and a call for some of the groups to go deeper and the Lord is calling us as a parish to go deeper in many different ways and to be more prayerful..
3. The Diaconate will be breaking new ground in our parish when Paul Gately is ordained next year. The role of a Deacon is service rather than leadership; he encourages, nurtures and supports, but does not replace everything that is done in the parish. Father said he is very pleased that Paul will be a Deacon in our parish.
4. Youth Fr. Tom said he was delighted the Youth Group had taken off in our parish and thanked Adam Simon. 13 redshirts will be going to Lourdes and although the parish has been very supportive in fundraising for their costs, they also need our prayers.

Questions and Comments:

1. In answer to a question, Fr. Tom explained that there were 6 applications for the overseas charity – all good causes. A sub-committee is examining them and a decision will be made by September.
2. Father Con Foley will be staying in the parish for the month of July while Fr. Tom is away. Fr. Foley will be teaching at Wonersh from September.
3. Lindy Wilson said she had heard many interesting things during the evening and it would be good to have them on the parish web-site. Lindy asked that information, reports of events and notice of future events be sent to her