



## CATHOLIC PARISH OF GUILDFORD

Approved Minutes, Formation Team Meeting, Wednesday 18/9/2019

**Attendees:** Susie Ball (**SB**), Zelma Braganza (**ZB**), Peter Charlwood (**PC**), Una Corning (**UC**) Aseel Gilbert (**AG**) Tina Nichols (**TN**) Chris Richardson (**CR**), Fr Roy Waters (**FRW**), Sinclair Webster (**SW**)

**Apologies:** None

**Circulation:** as preceding plus Mgr Tony Barry (**MTB**), Janet Burr (**JB**) Fr Sebastian Paul (**FrSP**), Fr Roy Waters (**FrRW**), Sandy Hunt (**SH**) Parish Secretary

**ACTIONS ARISING:** Initials in **BOLD**

### 1. Welcome, Introduction to Team, Opening Prayer

- i) Chris Richardson, as appointed Chair, welcomed the participants, who briefly summarised their participation in the Catholic Parish of Guildford as follows:
- **Susie Ball:** RCIA programme for the Parish, participant in Home Groups. Will share meeting attendance with Janet Burr
  - **Zelma Braganza:** EMHC for St Joseph's Community, participant in Home Groups. Governor at St Mary's Rydes Hill
  - **Peter Charlwood:** participant/co-ordinator of Home Groups
  - **Una Corning:** parishioner of St Pius X, St Pius X Liturgy Team member, nominated Secretary for this meeting
  - **Aseel Gilbert:** full time, employed Children, Youth & Families coordinator; coordinates all CYF activities in the Parish, including the First Holy Communion and Confirmation courses.
  - **Tina Nichols:** Marriage Preparation for the Parish (& Diocese), Liturgy Committee for St Joseph's
  - **Chris Richardson:** appointed Chair of this Team, Parishioner of St Pius X
  - **Fr Roy Waters;** appointed Clergy Representative for this team
  - **Sinclair Webster:** Parishioner of St Edward's (previously St Dunstan's Woking)

Fr Roy led the team in an opening prayer.

### 2. Setting Role of Formation in Context

#### i) Parish Structure

**Comments were made as follow:**

- how will the planned Pastoral work of the Co-Ordinating team, at the centre of the proposed Parish structure, filter down into each of the individual Church Communities? At St Pius X there is a small Council team, which still meets, plus a Liturgy Team, however nothing formal exists in the other three Communities, though some Liturgy tasks are being undertaken by specific individuals;
- for the proposed structure to work for any of the key areas of Prayer. Formation & Mission it was felt there needs to be a local contact point/team in each Community, supported by Volunteers who are willing and motivated to help
- Current employed staff should be represented on the structure, so that they feel part of it and can have a 'voice'.

#### ii) Parish Formation Document

- Bishop Richard Moth's focus on the inclusion of our Catholic Schools was underlined. There is already a lot happening in our schools in Guildford, with the celebration of Masses and Reconciliation, taking place either on site at St Peter's, or in St Mary's (for St Joseph's School, Rydes Hill & Rydes Hill Prep School)/ or St Pius X (for St Thomas of Canterbury School) on weekdays. AG also maintains a close working relationship with the Chaplain at St Peters Catholic School.

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- This good work in the Schools, is not currently obvious to Parishioners, specifically in how it translates or links into the individual Communities, with the result that Church & School can feel quite separate rather than integrated.
- Schools are already overloaded, and we cannot expect them to do more; our Parish Communities could play an important/valuable role in offering more volunteer help to support the work of the Chaplain in the Schools; ways of helping in this could be explored.
- An opportunity may be being missed in the schools being able to see the other experiences of religious life, for example, in terms of monastic life (for example at Chilworth Friary)
- The work of this Formation team, in the meantime, needs to focus on three core groups: regular, irregular and non-attenders

**iii) Final Formation Report**

Comments were made as follow:

- Participation in Parish Formation tends to attract the same core group of Parishioners; we need to attract a larger/wider group of Parishioners, as Formation should form a more important role in the growth of Faith.;
- Formation is a journey or maturation in ones' Faith: it can be episodic/different for different individuals. People find things that work for them: e.g. Lectio Divina (scripture reading, meditation or prayer); or Home Groups which focus on continuous teaching (currently studying Oremus); or the programme on Catholicism at Chilworth
- We need to share a 'hope' or to evangelise more confidently with others; our volunteers lack confidence in sharing their experience of Christ, particularly when confronted with questions about their Faith in normal 'everyday settings, whether at work or in the Pub.
- Formation in the Parish would really flourish if it could be supported by a dedicated paid employee who could be committed to developing it over a two-year period; however, the recent Financial Appeal did not generate enough funds to support the latter. Perhaps the Appeal should have had specific projects attached to it, tangible for Parishioners, rather than a 'big pot'
- Our Marriage Preparation course is an excellent example of how a Parish volunteer can help deliver a programme of Formation to a high standard; we should try to identify people who can do this in the context of limited Financial resource. To facilitate this, we need to find ways to engage the good will of Parishioners so that they want to support our Formation activity; some are keen to help but feel they are being pushed back, even though they have both skills and experience.
- Unfortunately, there hasn't been a formal programme of Formation for some considerable time in the Parish, like 'Renew' or similar, which inspired so many to help. Small Groups were the power of 'Renew', which created a real sense of belonging and community. Sadly our Clergy are under very increasing pressure of work, with even less time to spend in getting to know Parishioners in order to help identify or foster help easily
- We should try to empower Parishioners for whom 'money' is not the key motivation, rather their 'calling'. Times are very different now: people need to 'fall in love' with their Faith again, they need to feel something 'authentic' and meaningful in their Communities; that they really do feel welcomed and wanted. To help in this we should really focus effort on making Parishioners' experience of Mass the most welcoming and joyful place over the next 6-12 months; to re-energise the Parish with a climate in which they feel they want to re-engage with their Faith and will be willing to help or participate; it comes down to sense of identity; we need to change our minds about who we are; we are Children of God and our Faith is an amazing thing, remind Parishioners of this through our welcome, enthusiasm and affirmation.

**iv) Starting Points to take forward:**

To focus effort on 4-5 key things:

- **Our Welcome**
- **Catechists: recruit more and provide support to give them real confidence (eg CCO Faith Studies)**
- **Adult Confirmation: Develop a separate programme for this**
- **Use Lent 2020 as the opportunity to create a Parish wide, small group Lenten Reflection programme to re-engage with Parishioners**
- **Do something to affirm and encourage our current Volunteers**

3. Next Meeting: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019