

PDP2 – GROUP 3 - EXPRESSING OUR FAITH

INITIAL REPORT

Our group is concerned with how we express to those both inside and outside the Church the love we receive through faith.

Father James has asked that our first report should be short, with all the individual contributions summarised, with a broad brush synthesis of what we do well, what we do less well, and what we don't do at all in each area. This will give us a good platform for saying what our bold plan should look like. Detailed factual information is not required.

At our first meeting we agreed the following share of our initial tasks:

- Welcoming Ministry & Sick Visiting - Lana
- Irundu - Meg
- Parish Tithes - George
- Justice & Peace & Fair Trade - Marion
- Evangelisation & Ecumenism – Martin
- Young People - Ann
- PPC Structure, decision making and membership – Robin

This summary has been written by Robin, and was reviewed by the Group at a meeting on 10 February 2010. Some ideas for the future are included in an Appendix.

Welcoming Ministry & Sick Visiting

Welcome Ministry

What we do well:

At present the welcome ministry is very ably managed by Rosemary Sanders. All welcomers put the literature together to hand over to each parishioner as he/she comes in. After mass one of us mans the welcome desk. The vigil mass welcomers are also good. As it is a smaller congregation we do tend to speak to others more often. St Dunstan's is the friendliest as it is so small that you have to speak to the others as you collect your literature.

Coffee after the Worth Sunday mass is an extension of our welcome ministry which works well.

What we do less well:

Some of us forget to wear badges when it is not our day. We should really wear badges each Saturday or Sunday so that others get to know our names.

Some see us as a 'cliquey' parish. We need to take any new comers and introduce them to like minded individuals. We could use the coffee after mass to do this better. Parishioners should be encouraged to make an effort to speak to those they only know to "nod" to or to someone new. It is not good enough to leave this to social occasions. We are a creature of habit and only speak to those we are comfortable with.

What we don't do at all:

The welcomers at the Saturday mass don't have badges.

There is no one to help those who are wheelchair bound. We should have a couple of good wheelchairs available for use and helpers every Saturday and Sunday to help people into the church. It would be good if we could ask for help from the younger age groups.

Sick Visiting

What we do well:

This is an area where we fall short of 'doing well'

What we do less well:

At present local villages have their own *ad hoc* groups. Crawley Down hears of people through the grapevine and those nearest visit. We all pass on information about those who are ill and some follow up more frequently. Balcombe and West Hoathly also operate in this informal way. Jill Carter is the contact for a Car Share scheme that is advertised on the back page of In Touch. This could be developed further to offer wider help for disadvantaged Parishioners.

What we don't do at all:

Over the past five years there has been an attempt to formalise “visits to the sick” and “those in need” of help. Worth Care group was set up but folded. This was either due to the lack of referrals or because the help that was offered was not “hands on” care which quite a few in the parish needed.

Irundu

At the start of our relationship with Irundu we referred to our Twinning with Irundu. We now refer to our Friendship Parish. Some confusion still subsists between these two descriptions. We affirm that Friendship is a better description of our relationship.

Parish Survey

223 parishioners responded to the question dealing with the Irundu Friendship Project, of which 103 reported they were involved in Irundu at least to the extent of making financial contributions. 10 had actually visited Irundu. The same number responded to the question which asked them if the Irundu link had deepened their faith of which 45 said it had had a major effect.

Asked what people liked **more** or **less** about the parish, compared to five years previously, 10 people mentioned that the Irundu link made the parish better, and 3 argued that there were plenty of disadvantaged people in the local area or that our support should be limited.

There were 90 responses to the request for comments or ideas which had not been covered elsewhere, of which 12 related to the parish link with Irundu. Most of the 12 had concerns about the link e.g. our concern for Peru had lessened or we needed to think about links with deprived parishes closer to home. 1 response was very positive seeing the Irundu link as ‘a rare example of a church involved in real charity work’.

The PDP 2 survey indicates that 28% of respondents take a real interest in Irundu and 46% give financial support. It also indicates that 86% are aware of links with parishes in other countries and 24% are active with them.

What we do well:

One of the three elements in the vision set out in PDP1 is:

Offering – In a spirit of sharing and with true Christian love we offer our sister church our friendship, time, skills and material help.

We have responded well to this. The visit of six parishioners to Irundu, in October 2007 identified 3 areas for partnership – education, health and economic development. Through the generosity of a few anonymous donors progress has been made in these three areas through substantial infrastructure development. A major asset is the Friendship House, which provides a base for visitors to the parish. Donations from parishioners through collecting tins, events and collections at mass have also helped meet local needs.

Tangible results from our link with Irundu include:

- 17 parishioners/ clergy have visited Irundu so far (see Appendix 1 below)
- Fr Stephen has visited Worth, meeting numerous parishioners and attending the parish summer party
- A positive relationship has been established with both Fr Stephen and the Jijna diocese

- Regular updates, communication exercises and religious events including: video film made in 2007 shown in 2008; special shared Friendship Prayer; frequent intercessions; updates in In Touch and articles in PQ; updates on the parish website; displays after mass; presentation to Worth School voluntary service group; Balcombe concert and displays; 10th anniversary celebration mass in December 2009, with drinks, canapés and displays after mass; exchange of letters/ prayers between Worth house groups and Irundu small Christian communities.

What we do less well:

A second element of the vision in PDP1 is:

Learning – We wish to learn from our sister Parish. St. Matia has a vibrant faith and much to teach us, especially about liturgy, catechesis, social care and lay leadership. We will bring back to our own Parish the lessons we learn through our relationship.

Some of the things we don't do well:

More could be done in developing our understanding of Irundu's liturgy, catechesis, social care and lay leadership.

Irundu or Africa are rarely if ever mentioned in homilies.

More mention of Irundu should be encouraged in the intercessions. There is almost no mention of Irundu in the intercessions at the Saturday evening mass

What we don't do at all:

A third element of the vision in PDP1 is:

Receiving – We look forward to receiving many blessings from our friendship. By our participation in different ways, all of us will benefit; and in particular our young people will find inspiration for their own faith journeys.

One element of this that is missing is the involvement of young people. Only one of the 17 visitors is a teenager. We need to seek more ways for our parishioners to participate in our friendship with Irundu.

Parish Tithe

What we do well:

We allocate up to 10% of our Parish income for charitable donations. This is shared among a number of domestic and worldwide charities. The way charities are chosen depends on Fr James decision on how to make the choice, for example by inviting the Justice and Peace group to make the selection.

What we do less well:

The parish at large has little input to the way the charities are chosen. However this is not a major concern and our view is that no changes are needed.

Justice and Peace & Fair Trade

Justice and Peace

What we do well:

The **Justice and Peace Group** is part of the parish's work in the area of **Social Action** and it represents **Catholic Social Policy**. It is well explained on the parish website, events are announced after mass and are advertised in In-Touch & by flyer.

The group, which meets usually two months before speaker evenings is run by Cynthia Haynes. Their aim is to organise two minor and one major speaker events each year.

Donations go to the speakers from parish tithes & donations for refreshments.

The speaker events help to raise awareness of the issues represented. They also have the potential to raise the awareness of topical issues and the question of social responsibility for the whole parish.

What we do less well:

We don't involve young people, who certainly have questions and experience in this area.

We should open subjects for debate more widely throughout the parish. In particular our link with Irundu should be the platform for a wider exploration of both secular and religious issues on the continent.

Fair Trade

What we do well:

We are a registered fair Trade Parish and undertake only to provide Fair Trade produce at all our activities (e.g. coffee after mass).

Traidcraft PLC (www.traidcraft.co.uk) is a Christian based response to poverty and promotes Corporate Social Responsibility. In the context of Worth Parish it comes under the umbrella of **Social Action** alongside Justice and Peace and raises the profile of poverty and social responsibility within the parish at a very grass roots level. What is more immediate than a shop counter?

The group is run by Patricia Wallace and helpers work on a rota to try and ensure that there is a stall after every Sunday mass. Sales are on the increase

What we do less well:

We don't engage the young. Environmental issues are keenly felt by young people; it could be a key area for young parishioners.

We could raise the profile within the parish further. There could be a more regular focus on Living Simply to encourage parishioners to feel it as part of their expression of faith to promote and to buy fair-trade products.

Evangelisation & Ecumenism

Evangelising and Ecumenism did not, in fact, feature in PDP 1, but Outreach did, under which they may be included.

Evangelisation

What we do well:

The many charitable activities of the parish do manifest Christ's spirit. Individual parishioners, by their words and example, bring Christ to others. And if, like Fr James, you stretch evangelisation to deepening the faith of parishioners, catechesis and sermons do that.

What we do less well:

Evangelisation, in the sense of deliberately bringing the gospel to those who do not know Christ, has not happened, not in any organised, deliberate way.

Ecumenism

What we do well:

The Turners Hill vicar (when there is one) ministers to the Anglican boys in the school. And there are 6 joint services p.a., alternating between Eucharist and Mass.

Our parish priest and deacon meet thrice annually with the vicars of Turners Hill, Balcombe, Crawley Down and West Hoathly and with the chaplain to the Latvians at Rowfant, to discuss matters of mutual concern and actions to build friendship.

In Balcombe, Meg contributes a regular page on Worth parish to the Balcombe parish magazine, and Chris does the same for Turners Hill and Crawley Down. Also in Balcombe an ecumenical house group has been set up

Anglicans are invited to join outings (e.g. to Wintershall), Lenten discussion groups, and barbecues; and the Catholics are invited by the Anglicans to join in Palm Sunday processions and other services.

What we do less well:

Ecumenism, the campaign to restore unity to Christ's church, has continued at the level of friendliness, but it has probably declined rather than increased because of the decision to stop sharing Anglican and URC premises in Crawley Down, Balcombe, Turner's Hill.

Lana is active in interfaith action in Crawley, but more could be done to link our Parish with this work.

Young People

What we do well:

We run the Junior Church during Sunday Mass at the Abbey. We offer First Communion and Confirmation classes. FOG – the Follow On Group – is for young people, who start after First Communion and continue towards the time when they will be confirmed at fifteen. FOG takes place every six weeks on Saturday mornings from 10.00 until 11.00am. 5-8 children attend and the number is increasing. FOG allows children to enjoy themselves whilst creatively learning more about the faith they profess.

What we do less well:

According to the survey, several people wish to see more youth engagement at Worth. 'Perhaps some politically/environmentally/economically linked initiative that provides a link between the Catholic faith and a broader principle of living good lives as good, responsible, caring world citizens, lived examples of faith'.

Young adults often drift away from their faith or are simply distracted, yet feeling part of something and sharing beliefs with people they socialize with is something most young adults yearn for. As a parish, we should aim to provide a platform for young people to deepen their faith and thereby feel a sense of belonging.

What we don't do at all:

The Junior Church and FOG are aimed at children or teenagers, whereas there are no regular get-togethers for young adults.

PPC Structure, decision making and membership

What we do well:

The Worth Abbey Parish Pastoral Council (the PPC) exists to further the work of the Church in Worth Abbey Parish and beyond. The PPC is made up of the Parish clergy and lay members elected by the parishioners. The PPC advises the Parish Priest, who in turn is responsible to the Bishop of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The current PPC is active, meets regularly, and has advised Fr James on PDP2 and will consider the various reports from the three Groups before these are published.

What we do less well:

Although Minutes are published on the web site the work of the PPC is not very visible to most parishioners. PPC members are elected, but candidates are hard to find and the composition of the PPC does not necessarily reflect the needs of the parish as a whole.

APPENDIX

Our first task was to evaluate where we are now. Inevitably this evaluation has generated ideas for the future, which will be reviewed in more detail as we prepare our next report. Some of these ideas are set out here:

Welcoming Ministry & Sick Visiting

Have more families to be welcomers

Welcomers to take part in the offertory

Welcomers to be pro-active in introducing new parishioners to others during coffee

All Welcomers, whether on duty or not, to look out for regular parishioners who are absent from mass, and a system of following absentees up to be introduced

Have a 'sit somewhere else' day – and greet your new neighbours.

Wheel chairs and helpers needed

We should develop a scheme for giving people lifts to church

Irundu

Now the Friendship House is available, find ways of making full use of its facilities

Find ways of bringing to life the positive experiences of those who come to Irundu for those who can't visit.

The school should be a high priority focus for our help, together with health and economic development.

Consider bringing more people from Irundu to Worth – those who will benefit from the experience and can teach us directly from their own experience, for example teachers, catechists, medical helpers.

Important to encourage young people to visit, but need to ensure visits are not just 'poverty tourism' but have a positive objective.

Justice and Peace & Fair Trade

Consider widening the Justice & Peace brief to look at and get involved with political issues.

Young People

The diocese puts on two yearly events, which appear popular amongst young people; they do not appear to be well marketed at our parish.

Youth Gather

Youth Gather is an annual youth festival event which has been running in the diocese for a great many years. It begins with Mass – normally celebrated by the Bishop – followed by a sponsored walk and then a celebration to end. In 2009, the Mass and celebrations were held at St Wilfrid's school, Crawley.

Redshirts

For the past few years the Redshirts have been an important part of the annual diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.

The Redshirts are officially known as the Lourdes Youth Service Group, but they are nicknamed 'the redshirts' for reasons which aren't too difficult to figure out.

The role of the Redshirts is to provide a welcome at the Masses and other events of the pilgrimage and to serve people in many other ways.