

Holy Rood Parish: developing prayer, communion and mission

At the PPC meeting on 22nd Feb 2017, those present engaged in a brainstorming exercise looking at how we might develop as a parish over the next 5 years in 3 areas highlighted by Bishop Declan in recent years: Prayer, Mission and Communion. Canon John Cunningham and acting chair, Marguerite Holliday, met on 24th March to look at suggestions and agree some focus for action. Below is the outcome of these combined meetings.

Prayer

The group who met to discuss this area of church life noted that there are many different opportunities for prayer in the parish, outside of the mass. This is a cause for celebration. It seems, however, that there remains a challenge a) to make these opportunities known to all and b) to let parishioners know that they are welcome to these groups/ encourage their attendance. Areas for action for all to keep in mind:

- Think about using currently available communication methods (newsletter, notice boards, website) and perhaps develop new methods to increase awareness of what is already happening
- Look to involving the housebound in any prayer initiatives, via those who visit them, website and newsletter
- Rosary after weekday masses. Currently a number of individuals and a couple of informal groups pray the rosary after weekday mass already. It was suggested that this be formalised somewhat so that more people would feel welcome to join in e.g. by having the Rosary in English some days and Konkani on others.

Specific action:

1. Canon John to invite those who currently pray the Rosary on weekdays to meet and look at how they might lead on this initiative
2. Re-ignite the monthly prayer / prayer card initiative, initiated via the PPC a year ago - keeping in mind issues that have been raised by the PPC around mission and communion/community as noted in these minutes. Basic format: the intention would be stated simply, the Pope's monthly intention also stated, followed by a few simple prayers (e.g. an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be). Perhaps start with home producing 1,000 per month.

Example intentions:

- for a solution to the need for more meeting space for the parish
- for those who have left the church to return/ for the courage to invite them back
- for children and young people at Holy Rood, that they would feel welcome and loved here

Mission

This group acknowledged the importance of:

- Issues of justice and peace,
- Outreach to those in material and spiritual poverty,
- Welcome to all including children and engagement of young adults

Once again, there was an acknowledgement of how much already happens in the parish.

Specific Action:

1. Develop ways to communicate to all more of what is happening to increase awareness and so that more people could be involved in this work. There was a particular desire to remember / look for ways to serve the poor of spirit, those who are disabled or mentally ill within and beyond our congregation.

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2. Actively recruit and train more laptop/ projector operators; use a 'welcome' screen more and highlight a couple of important notices (e.g. about initiatives noted in these minutes) on the screen at the start/ end of weekend masses. Also, in due course entrance/ communion antiphons and responses could be projected, minimising need for so many paper newsletters/ making space for other material.

Communion

This group focused on a desire to continue to develop and build community through good liturgy, opportunities for formation, working together and doing more together socially. And to do more of what works in these areas – e.g. recent DVD led sessions on the Gospels, the Saints and Alpha. A need for more space was identified as necessary to take these and many of the above initiatives forward.

Specific Action:

1. Prayer for some solutions to the issues of need for different kinds of meeting space.
2. Be open to opportunities for gathering socially.

Meeting agenda

7.10 - refreshments/ catch up

7.30 - opening reflection and prayer together

7.40 – meeting business

20 mins	Talk in small groups then share outcomes of discussion re areas of focus and action. In the different areas of focus: What can I as an individual do to move this forward? Can any church group I belong to be involved? Could I/ we involve others from within or beyond the church in any of these initiatives?
10 mins	Feedback a summary to each other
3 mins	Agree a meeting date for the Autumn term to review progress
5 mins	Prayer time on what has been shared
Action for next week	Post meeting notes (over) on notice board, together with bulletin notice and website page – inviting parishioners to keep the prayer, mission and community life of the parish in their prayers and consider how they might be actively involved.

8.30 - end