

Our Lady and St Bridget's Church Parish Mission Follow-up Group: Feedback and Recommendations

Background

Following the Parish mission a small group of volunteers agreed to take back the points raised at the Mission feedback session and develop these into a proposal for the consideration of the Parish Council.

Mission feedback points

These points were generated from the Parishioners who attended the session. In total there were 12 parishioners who took part in the feedback session. The aim of the session was to develop ideas for a "Parish Awakening" to help a practising Parish become an evangelizing parish. Attendees were split into two groups and the same set of questions was posed to each group.

1. Can you identify steps that the parish community can take to begin sharing its faith with everyone in the area and especially with the lapsed members of the parish?
2. Is there any aspect of your mission experience that you would like to deepen and develop as part of your own spirituality?
3. How could the Parish help you to develop this spirituality?

Each group then fed back their ideas¹.

Volunteers were recruited to take forward the output from this session. The "Mission Volunteers" group² then developed these points into the draft Action plan for consideration. Condensing the feedback into themes, two main themes that emerged;

- Engagement – Reaching out

There was a lot of discussion related to the need to recognise the feeling of "grief" within parishioners from St Thomas's and how going forward as a combined Parish, the strengths of talent and experience that Thomas's parishioners possess, is recognised and individuals are supported to join ministries and groups in the Parish.

- Spiritual Renewal -Education

¹ Appendix 1 – Group Feedback sheets

² Volunteer Group members; Tom Mullen, Dr John Watts, Stephen Tumilowicz, Alison Nind Margaret Meek,

The action plan is developed under the headings displayed below:

Theme	Suggestions	ACTION	Purpose	Level of difficulty to implement	Priority/ Timescale	Lead
Theme developed from parishioner feedback- What we are trying to achieve.	Ideas that may help us achieve our aim	Specific action that we can build on to deliver aim.	Intent what are we trying achieve	Colour coded assessment of how difficult idea would be to implement. Red difficult will take a lot of effort resource Amber – Medium difficulty Green – Will not require much effort	To be agreed by PPC.	Nominated individuals to take forward action

Theme	Suggestions	Action	Purpose	Level of difficulty to implement	Priority/ Timescale	Lead
Engagement- How do we reconnect with "dormant" parishioners and attract and sustain existing and new parishioners	Reaching out	Develop role of "Parish Welcomers"	Feedback from the group recognised the Parish as a strong community but for newcomers to the Parish it can be difficult to get to know people. This role would involve standing at the entrance to the church and welcoming people as they arrived.			
		Develop a poster advertising who is on the Parish Council	Not everyone will wish to approach Priest direct because of his commitments but may be more comfortable approaching a member of the Parish Council if there is something they wish to ask.			
		Utilise Social Media more to engage with the community.	Facebook community groups could be used to inform people of what is going on in the Parish.			
		Engage with young people in the congregation to join the PPC and the mission volunteer group.	To get the young people's voice /opinions to engage in developing Parish plan.			
		Develop Registry of groups available and advertise lead contact for each group.	Communicate with Parishioners groups e.g. Men's Club, Fabric, SVDP already established in the Church and how they contact them if they wish to be involved.			
		Lay people making announcements before mass	A personal approach of delivering updates re what is happening in the Parish that week, prayers for the sick, announcing anniversaries etc.			

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Engagement- How do we reconnect with dormant parishioners and attract and sustain new parishioners	Reaching out	Coffee/Tea after mass	Provides an opportunity for people to meet after mass			
		Identify parishioners from the St Thomas's and OLSB Parish register and mail shot them.	Idea to re-engage them with the Parish Pamphlet re mass times, groups available Contact numbers.			
		Display contact information in local Nursing Homes sheltered housing complexes for Catholics who may have moved into the area but cannot get to mass.	Gives new residents a direct approach to join our community. Advertise the availability of Eucharistic ministers to visit homes			
		Build on the Children's liturgy group, currently engages with 3-8 year old, need to develop a group for 8+ to maintain connection with community	Maintain children's engagement with being an active part of the Parish. Invite Young people to read at Mass.			
		Develop a Young people's parish project	To motivate youth involvement a parish charity such as Marys Meals Build a Church hall - this idea was strongly supported in feedback session.			
		Reach out to St Thomas's parishioners.	Commemorating annually the joining of the Church of St Thomas with Our Lady and St Bridget's and remembering the people and history of St Thomas Church.			

Theme	Suggestions	Action	Purpose	Level of difficulty to implement	Priority/ Timescale	Lead
Spiritual Renewal	EDUCATION	Monthly events calendar with invited speakers or using resources for Bible Study and informing our Faith. This could be themed to follow the Liturgical seasons or other themes e.g. Youth, married couples. Healing services.	Strengthen Parishioners, to live their baptismal promises. Personal development.			
		Retreats Engage with other Parishes for a cluster retreat.	Develop spiritual community and also provides opportunity for networking with other parishes.			
		Music group	Develop a music group, to lead on traditional and different music at mass e.g. young people guitar folk mass.			
		Develop other spiritual groups	Prayer groups and others. In reach to school – enhance link between school s and parish			
		Develop a range of library resources for parishioners to access to read.	A lending library for parishioner’s families to borrow from.			

Recommendation/Ask of PPC

- We are asking the PPC to note the ideas that have come from the mission evaluation meeting.
- Prioritise the actions into short medium and long term timescales.
- Recommend / Identify others to engage as leads to take forward specific actions.
- Act as a steering group to oversee implementation of plan and provide support where necessary.

Prepared by Mission Volunteers Group

27/4/2019

Appendix 1 – Group Feedback

1) Group ①
Need to know who beyond ecc.
Attract people / school / local / Parents /
Children participation in Church.
2) Everything in us comes from God! - Spirit within
us.
3) Working on ourselves
Parish Redreaths. / School visits
Social things in the church.
Start of a new vision for Parish for ourselves
Church Hall!

Group 2
Keep door open to people who have left the church
Young people / Clergy approach / Youth zone /
Children liturgy group.
Morning Hours! How do we find out who they are?
Volunteers!
Challenge for youth! Major Week.
Bible study / different themes / talks /
Hope - we are a strong community.
Different groups / choir
May procession