

## Parish Open Meeting

16<sup>th</sup> May 2020 conducted via Zoom

33 participants present at the start of the meeting

Including Fr Simon, Fr Bob, Deacon Geoff, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes)

Apologies: Monica King

The Chair opened the Meeting with a brief explanation of some of the Zoom functions that participants could use and the protocol of how the meeting would run over Zoom and thanked Jim O'Sullivan for monitoring the Chat area. He thanked Martin Avery for hosting the meeting.

After an opening prayer from Fr Simon, the minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be an accurate record.

### 1. Online Liturgy

The Chair offered thanks for all the online liturgies on behalf of the Parish and expressed appreciation for all the various contributions including music and readings. The Meeting agreed with these sentiments.

Appreciation was also offered by one parishioner for the suggestion to use mobile phones as a way of sharing the audio of the livestreamed Masses, which she had successfully managed to do.

The current liturgical offerings, excluding livestreamed Mass, are:

9am Morning Prayer – and Saturdays only praying the Rosary

6pm – Evening Prayer

7.50pm – Night Prayer (Compline)

Exposition has also been running on Wednesday evenings, but the viewing figures have been low. Normally Exposition and Benediction should have a minimum of 12 people in attendance, but Fr Simon is happy to continue if 2 or 3 people are tuning in.

DISCUSSION concluded that Fr Simon would rather leave people to attend freely rather than organise a rota; that Exposition isn't possible during the day at the moment due to the church being open for private prayer and no type of communal liturgy being allowed; that YouTube and website numbers are all being counted however, because there are various viewing options, all 'views' need to be totalled.

**ACTION:** Tech team to check Exposition attendance across all views and report numbers back to Fr Simon.

### 2. Private Prayer

We have received directions from the Bishops' Conference on the re-opening of churches for private prayer only and the stewarding of this. Fr Simon had hoped to manage with one steward per session but the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer has confirmed that two stewards

are obligatory to protect both the stewards and any vulnerable people who may be in the church.

The current opening times are as follows, but this may change depending on the number of volunteers to be stewards:

Monday – Saturday: 10am-12noon and 2pm-6pm split into 2 x 2hr stewarding shifts. Total 3 x 2-hour stewarding session per day = 18 sessions a week to be covered.

Fr Simon appealed for people to volunteer if they are able as more volunteers are required to cover all sessions.

Gail Osman commented that she has been involved with other organisations that have recently produced guidelines and risk assessment statements for similar activities, and that she could share those with Fr Simon. Those activities required a DBS-checked steward, although they were different in nature to our opening of the church for private prayer.

There was no comment or objection to the current time slots being offered. Fr Bob added that the Blackfriars open times dovetail nicely at 12-1pm and 7-9pm Mon-Fri and 3-5pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

DISCUSSION concluded: that steward contact details should be shared within the stewarding group in case someone is unable to do their allocated slot; that all candles and votives if not already removed should be removed from the church; that if someone who had been in the church for prayer subsequently developed COVID19, the time and date that they had been in the church would be published on the website. The stewards who had been on duty would also be consulted - both for their own sake, and to see if they could recall others who had attended at the same time.

Jim O’Sullivan confirmed, having taken the measurements, that closing every other pew does give a distancing of 2m.

**ACTION:** Fr Simon to revisit the rota and adjust. Also, to confirm that there is no requirement for DBS checks for this activity.

Gail – email guidelines document to Fr Simon

### 3. Discussion document for returning to Mass

The discussion document currently available through the Parish website summarising the discussion so far for returning to Mass at church was looked at again briefly and a couple of points drawn out:

Use of school field for Mass – after talking to those involved with preparing for Parish Day Masses in previous years, it became clear that the health and safety and insurance issues involved make this an impractical process to attempt.

Receiving Communion – an alternative to the traditional place of Communion in the Mass was suggested, and that would be that it could move to the end of Mass. A document

shared by another church online had suggested that this retains the essential nature of Communion while maintaining social distancing.

Fr Simon reminded the Meeting that if the priest circulates between the benches then people's social distance does not need to change. However, he questioned whether this would then mean that the Priest could potential become a 'super spreader'? It was also pointed out that someone social distancing and not intending to take Communion may not appreciate the Priest walking by so closely.

DISCUSSION around the topic of returning to church concluded that: it may be possible to return a number of the single black chairs along the front of the first set of pews during the private prayer sessions for those who are unable to easily access the pews. But, this may not be possible once we return for Mass; that Confession is available by appointment, but that it is not possible to hold it in the Confessional due to lack of social distanced space. Fr Simon has been hearing Confession in the Parish Room. Anonymous Confession is therefore not currently possible; that parishioners with contacts abroad offered to report back at the next meeting on best practice; that we should be aware and take into account that some people have a different risk appetite from the general consensus; that whatever we do will be informed by national guidelines.

**ACTION:** Review the findings of parishioners reporting back from relatives abroad as to what has worked well and what has not worked as their churches have reopened. Continue to discuss and update this working document.

#### 4. AOB

Post Mass Zoom Coffee – Serga Collett offered to host a trial run after the 9am Mass following a positive experience of this at her village Parish church. The Zoom invite could be shared via the 'keep-in-touch' newsletter.

**ACTION:** Serga and Steve W to discuss how best to proceed and to set up a trial run.

Ron Haynes asked whether using the Parish Room to re-record a group Rosary praying session for Radio Maria would be possible. However, guidelines say this is strictly forbidden, but the option of recording the garden with no more than 6 people could be possible.

#### 5. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30pm. If you would like to attend write to [openmeetings@saintlaurence.org](mailto:openmeetings@saintlaurence.org) for the Zoom invite. Feedback welcome on this meeting.