

ST EDMUND'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL AGM 2017

Chairman's Report

Thank You

As always, I would like to begin by saying a huge thank you to Fr Charles for shepherding his flock over the past year. As he mentions in his own report, we are a small parish – some might say vulnerable – and are very lucky to have our very own full time priest, despite, as he keeps reminding us, his advancing years! So, thank you, Fr Charles.

Parish Evangelisation

Those of you who were here last year might recall that I outlined a two-pronged approach to create a thriving parish, one where we, as individuals and as a community, can develop a closer relationship with Christ and live out His message in our daily lives. These were: 1. strengthening our links with the school and 2. holding more parish events with a social dimension. I'm pleased to say that the PPC has embraced both challenges and already we are seeing the benefits, for example, in the higher attendances at Family Masses and a greater sense of community, be it here in the hall after Mass or at various parish events/activities.

Strengthening Links with the School

Having Sam (Head of School) and Emma (school parent, governor and chair of FOSSES) involved in the PPC has been a huge plus. Over the past year, Sam has worked closely with Caroline (children's choir lead) on improving the children's involvement in our Family Masses and she also persuaded Fr Charles to host the school nativity play in the church – providing an opportunity for many of the parents to visit our beautiful church for the first time. Both Sam and Emma, along with other parents in the parish, have also been instrumental in getting more parents from the school involved in parish events such as the Paschal supper (where the children took an active role and their artwork on Judaism decorated the hall) and the St Patrick's Day party. These are just a few examples of the progress we have made over the past year and, as you can read in Sam's report, further activities are planned for next year. We are very lucky to have a school within our parish – the children and their families bring such joy and hope and energy – and I firmly believe that closer links will benefit both the school and the parish.

Parish/Social Events

Aside from our traditional events such as the Winter BBQ/St Edmund's Day, we held a very successful Crib Festival – again an opportunity for many Bungay residents and others to visit our church for the first time. Many thanks to Sue and Jenny and Pio for co-ordinating this. Then, in the Spring, we had trinity of events...members of our Filipino community led the Women's World Day of Prayer (thanks to Aida and Pam), then we had a very lively and well attended St Patrick's party (thanks to all involved and esp to Peter, our compere), followed shortly afterwards by our Paschal Supper (thanks to Sonia and family who catered for a record 57 guests). More recently, we had a wonderful parish celebration for our FHC children and, despite rather inclement weather, had a good turn-out for our parish outing to St Andrew's church in Walberswick, where we were joined by friends from Beccles. Looking to the year ahead, I hope we will enjoy more events such as these ...my mantra is "the parish that plays together stays together, and prays together". Importantly, this year, we have the additional parish celebration of Confirmation in October, and this presents us with the challenge/opportunity of demonstrating to our teenage parishioners the relevance of parish life, in terms of both spiritual and pastoral support. Any ideas or help you can provide in this area would be welcomed.

The next stage

Looking to the year ahead, in addition to doing more of the same i.e. building a strong and thriving parish, we plan to take on the challenge of tackling issues beyond the parish gate. At our most recent PPC meeting, we decided, with strong support from Fr Charles, to respond as a parish to Laudato Si', Pope Francis' encyclical in which he asks us to help tackle the interrelated problems of environmental degradation and poverty. Thank you to Shirley, who will lead this project and we look forward to hearing about your team's ideas in the coming weeks and months.

So, as a parish, there is plenty to do and plenty to look forward to over the coming year!

Sunday, 30 July 2017