

Pastoral Team Meeting Thursday 23rd September 2021

Funerals and Covid Regulations: Returning numbers to Mass have gone down for the past two months, it is the same in other areas. No issues in Church. At one stage we had an issue with numbers going into graveyard, but this has been solved.

Two weddings lately – poor response to the wearing of masks.

Abs. Weddings are maybe more relaxed – make-up may be an issue!

St. Mary's – open the windows at the side when ushers arrive on duty to let the air circulate.

Parish Mission: We need to think of names now and start booking.

Date chosen – Sunday 11th September 2022 to Friday 16th September 2022

Each speaker to be given a brief on theme for their particular night.

We want to cater for all ages and have a Parish Gathering to start the Mission.

Themes:

- Bereavement
- Addiction
- Youth night
- Mental Health

Start with Blessing of the Graves on the Sunday

- Blessing of the graves in early part of the day
- Mission that evening
- People return for a start to the liturgy, eg, walk

Sub-committee – bring in more people as part of the sub-committee.

Our job is not necessarily to do the work, but to get others to come on board with us.

Helplines with GAA Clubs: St. Mary's and Emmetts and representatives from the Pastoral Team are to meet to put together this credit car size helpline numbers. Cards to be issued to all parishioners.

Cycle Against Suicide: Names of those to be trained as Community Buddies:
11 names – another week to think about anyone else.
The first Parish to do this.

AGENDA

Getting people back to Church:

As we slowly begin to see those Covid regulations drop and a return to a new norm occur, Churches will begin to see the possibility of our numbers increasing, but is doubtful if we will never see our numbers back to what they were pre-covid. There is a general feeling at the moment that numbers are actually falling for the past two months, that's certainly our experience here in Aghalurcher.

There is still some fear out there, that is understandable. There is also a laziness and a slipping off the radar when it comes to coming back to Sunday Mass.

We need to think about ideas in how we might encourage our people back into Church.

We will place a notice into the bulletin and our social media outlets to ask for ideas from the people, and perhaps also to issue a printed invitation card with a welcome back message and the details of our services on it, and then to bring those ideas to our Pastoral Team Meeting.

Young families are no longer connecting with us even online. Canon Jimmy asked the children in school to watch online this weekend and he will mention them at Masses.

We are fearful that our children will lose a sense of Church and its language and faith itself.

When children come to their First Communion it could be their first time in Church, and it will be a strange place to them.

Do people want to be personally invited back as families? Sending an invitation for you and your family to come to Church for a special day might work.

Letter drafted by Canon Jimmy – this is a personal invitation to families that could be sent out to every family in the Parish.

Mass online – people feel this is fulfilling their obligation, but there is a big fall off on the stats. And it is difficult to keep children sitting and watching.

Concern – we've already had Confirmation and First Communion for the past 2 years and children not in Church and now we face our third year.

Children have no contact / no sense of Church.

Suggestion of a children's Mass that schools tune into. Bring representatives from the schools to take part. Children's liturgy. Sense of involvement.

Let young people know that they can become Eucharistic Ministers and Readers from age 16 – this will encourage families to attend Mass.

Approach the schools and see if they are willing to join a Parish initiative – each school do their own liturgy

Youth choir from schools in time.

Funeral Options:

It is becoming more and more common now to meet families who are no longer going to Church and practicing the Catholic faith, but who are also still requesting a funeral mass for a loved one when they die.

Many of these people no longer have a belief in what we Catholics believe the Eucharist to be, and so this can lead to a great disrespect to our faith belief, or worse still a sacrilege. Most continue to ask for the Funeral Mass, simply because there is no alternatives offered.

To protect the integrity of the Mass, to ensure that all parishioners are offered the services of the Church, and treated with the same equal respect, and to ensure everyone's right to a Christian burial is protected, alternative services are now to be offered.

When a loved one dies, the Undertaker, as the first port of call will offer the family these options so that the family do not feel under pressure to have a full Funeral Mass.

When Covid regulations are lifted, the Bereavement Team will look after the burial of ashes.

We are not saying someone will not get a funeral Mass but we are showing that there are other options. People are not totally disconnected from the Church, this is evidenced by the way families who go directly to the cremation are still requesting that a Priest prays at the burial of the ashes.

Net Ministries: a group of 5 young people will be here from 31st October for 3 weeks there have been ongoing meetings with the 4 local school principals and a support team has been set up to be there for the young people. Pastoral Team members are also encouraged to visit their accommodation in support. They will be mainly working in schools, and especially St. Kevin's.

Will be here for 1 week each month after initial 3 weeks. Their work will be monitored and hopefully we will then bring them on board from September to May. They will be involved in preparing children for sacraments. School retreats in St. Kevin's.

AOB:

A suggestion was made to have an Ecumenical Christmas Carol Service at the commons in Maguiresbridge. Local ministers to be contacted.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 28th October 2021