

Parish Council Report 2015

Each Year the Parish Council produces a brief report of their work over the previous 12 months

Family Life and Marriage, Rob Dunbar

The Synod of the Family in Rome produced a document at the end of their discussions.

A very brief summary of the recommendations.

- decided against overhauling the Church's teaching on gay Catholics
- confirmed that marriage is between a man and a woman
- recognised **all** should be treated with dignity.
- greater openness towards divorcees, without mentioning specifics.
- issues that affect the family:- poverty, migrants, refugees, those persecuted for their faith, the pastoral needs of the handicapped, the elderly, widows and those in interfaith marriages.
- condemned violence against women within the family,
- an appreciation of women and their promotion to positions of authority.

Pope Francis will face opposition in any attempt to change Church teachings, but the upcoming jubilee year of mercy could serve as an opportunity to look at Catholic family life.

Locally family life and marriage remains at the core of Parish life, i.e. the large numbers of baptisms and marriages over the last year.

The next Family Life and Marriage presentation will be for the RCIA group in March.

Mission Kath, O'Sullivan

The parish have raised their pledged amount for the children in the special needs unit Akhotokurom through an awareness weekend, annual parish sponsored walk and a harvest supper. The harvest supper was a new event and proved to be an evening of delicious

food, warm company with entertainment from many talented parishioners.

In the last year, Catford SVP Conference has made over 150 visits, delivering household goods, food bank vouchers, food, and, with the help of our Mini Vinnies, hampers to local people in need. We have successfully applied for five grants for individuals from SVP head office or special funds, and paid for goods /services from Conference funds on more than 30 occasions. This year, we are planning to look more at befriending in the local community, and would welcome more members.

Holy Cross Catholic School, Mary Collins

Holy Cross School continues to be a thriving and happy environment for children in which they make progress academically but also in the knowledge and understanding of their faith. We teach children how to live their faith through a deep understanding of the Gospel values. Children are encouraged to be responsible, respectful and to enjoy the benefits of our strong community. The children of Holy Cross bring great joy and pride to the School and they delight in the regular collaborations with the Parish and the Diamond Club.

Pastoral report, Lesley Allen

The Diamond club continues to offer a weekly group for older adults aimed at improving health and wellbeing and helping to reduce isolation.

The club was successful in securing a grant for a yearly reading project bringing classic literature in an accessible way to people sharing views and experiences.

45-60 older people meet weekly. The group has taken part in an intergenerational project in conjunction with Age Exchange with Holy Cross School looking at evacuees in WW11.

Another New Year celebration is planned for 80 older people of the Diamond Club as well as our more vulnerable housebound members of the parish.

With the welcome addition of Fr. Regis to our parish several of the

nursing homes this year have received wonderful home Masses. Our Remembrance Week where those who have died from the parish and are prayed for and a candle lit had an additional display memorial board added a focus for prayer, which was displayed in church.

A dedicated team of special ministers continue to bring Holy Eucharist to over 30 members of the parish.

Liturgy Report, M Philomin

Daily Mass Monday to Fridays, followed by Holy Rosary including prayer for vocations, Divine Mercy on Wednesdays, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and benediction on Fridays. A team of readers and special ministers help during weekday mass.

During Lent: Stations of the Cross on Friday nights led by different parish groups. The turn out for this devotion was more than the previous years. Lenten services in Tamil for the parish Tamil community.

As part of their Service Project confirmation candidates help out with welcoming at the 6.30 Mass. Two young persons people from the previous year have joined the 6.30 team.

Prayer groups meet in Hartley Hall 1) The Scripture Reflection, 2) Centering and 3) Queen of Peace (Tamil).

Maintenance Report, Susan Hooper

The church heating was identified last year as a priority for 2015. The heating system was upgraded in the summer with new and efficient radiators. To date the church is much warmer and the upgrade seems to be a success. During 2016 all old signage for Hartley Hall and the church will be replaced.

The Jack Petchey Achievement Award Scheme (3 awards per year), **Vicki De Mello**

Our community recognises, rewards and celebrates the achievements of young people in our parish (aged 11-25).

Award Winners 2015: Ejiro Okor (March 2015) and Alice Head (June 2015) long term altar servers Aisling O'Hara November 2015 award for participation in church activities.

Winners used award money for Holy Cross young people: Paintballing, trip to Thorpe Park and a Christmas get together.

This year's Leader Award to Tony Green who works hard to prepare music for the band. He rehearses and conducts them at 10am Mass. He works tirelessly to help the young people to believe in themselves. He is a very kind, caring man, who always has a smile on his face, and time to help others.

Hartley Hall, Angela Allen

Hartley Hall continues to offer a unique resource for our Parish. The accommodation is used by a wide range of parish and other groups. It regularly hosts all sacramental preparation sessions, Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation and RCIA, as well as being a venue for formation and training in our deanery. Prayer groups, the Diamond Club and parish organisations such as the UCM and SVP: make good use of the facilities. The Coffee mornings after 10am Mass allow parishioners the invaluable opportunity to meet up and keep in touch.

Works undertaken / ongoing.

- Chairs – have been reupholstered,
- The Roof has been investigated and quotations for repair have been sought.
- Repairs to the Ceiling will follow roof repair
- Renovating/refitting the kitchen will follow repairs to the roof.

The facilities of Hartley Hall are the envy of many parishes and are regularly reviewed and updated.

Welcoming Team Report, Joe Baptiste

There has been significant improvements to the weekend Masses

1. Distributing the Newsletter or leaflets and greeting parishioners at the door.
2. Making arrangements for less physically able parishioners to have comfortable seating
3. The collection and procession is controlled as normal at each Mass by the team.

There are significant changes at the rear of the church on both sides.

1. A new area has been set aside as a children's book area.
2. The other area of the rear, close to the candles has become the information centre where the ushers give information and answer individual questions about parish contact details.

Three new members joined the welcoming Team. The whole Team is thanked and commended for their work and dedication to the parish and its celebrations.

Catechesis, Ossie Folkes

The Parish Sacramental preparation programmes for Baptism, Reconciliation / Eucharist and Confirmation ran successfully again this year as well as a Baptism and Eucharist catch up programme for older children. The Confirmation Service project is now well established and recognised within the parish. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults welcomed 8 adults and two children at the Easter Vigil. The RCIA group celebrates its Silver jubilee this year. A wide group of catechists support the two children's liturgy groups for the 10am Mass

Catechists have taken part in training and induction at deanery and diocesan level. New catechists have been welcomed. The

Catechists were reminded at their annual get together of their important role in evangelisation.

Thank you to all parish Catechists.

Readers and Special ministers have had spiritual input and training. The rotas have been updated and new readers and special ministers introduced.

Parish Statistics	1990	2015
Mass attendance	757	754
Baptisms	45	44
RCIA	0	8
Confirmations	22	23
Marriages	10	9

Themes across all the work of the Parish Council in the coming year.

1. STEWARDSHIP

Prayer during Lent and Advent this year was the start of our journey to becoming a Stewardship Parish. The Parish Day of Prayer strengthened parishioners resolve to base all our enterprises on Prayer, and prayer will continue to be at the core of our efforts.

2. EVANGELISATION

Evangelisation is **everyone's** responsibility and is incorporated in to **all** we do in our parish.

3. Year of Mercy

Parish Council will look for opportunities to further develop the Works of Mercy, for the coming year, particularly in the Sacramental programmes.