

Parish AGM

Sunday 14th July 2019

1. Opening Prayer
2. Fr Philip's Remarks (see text below)
3. The Election of new PPC members: Samira Faorweather Ceccarelli, Ranjeeva Fonseka, George Koupi and Nishadi de Silva were all appointed to the Parish Pastoral Council.
4. Reports from various Parish organisations were presented as posters in the Parish Centre

Fr Philip Remarks

Since our last AGM it has been a very busy year.

And yet we have got through it. Indeed the only way I have got through it has been through the stalwart efforts of many people.

It is only right that I begin here with many many 'thank you's.

So many people have done so much: there has been the Centenary Committee and helpers, new fundraising initiatives, Sacramental Programmes and so much more some of which I will speak a bit more about in a moment.

We did have a PPC meeting a few days ago and many of my remarks here overlap, so apologies to those who have already heard some of this!

1). There has been what we might call the usual: First Holy Communion and Confirmation, Christmas, HW and Easter -- all went well I think.

One element of the usual of special note this last year has been the success of our planned giving campaign. Clearly we must not be complacent, but our finances are on a much stronger footing now. Thank you to the Finance Committee and all who assisted in that; and special thanks to the marvellous generosity and commitment of our parish community.

2). The less usual: CENTENARY so far so good. There have been so many notable events, our Quiz Night, the Produce Sale, the Ecumenical Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, our Centenary Mass with the Cardinal, our Marian Devotions in May and our recent Pilgrimage to Canterbury. Monies raised less than our ambitious desire but sufficient for the hire of Marquee and Parish Mission, although not enough for the new font that we considered.

The next Major Centenary event is our Parish Mission in November: this is well on track, please keep this in your prayers. I hope this will be a time of renewal and growth.

Missio/ Extraordinary Month of Mission again so far so good. After quite a few frustrations things are coming together. This has taken a substantial chunk of my time, as I had previously intimated that it would. But the end is in sight. DD position understood to be 5 yr + 5 yr extension. This is my 10th year and I have thus offered my resignation to the Cardinal. However, when I saw him briefly last week, he was saying that he wanted me to stay on for a while, and it looks like I will be in this post for at least another year.

St John's Fire. The sad fire at our Church of England neighbour's has been a major event, We did offer to provide space for their worship. They have taken us up on a couple of occasions and we shall host them for their Christmas Nine Lessons and Carols.

Summer Timetable: many parishes do run a summer timetable during the quieter months of the year. This is something we are thinking about in terms of what sort of pattern of Sunday Masses we need in the long summer holidays. It is notable that during the holiday season there are inevitably fewer people coming to Mass, with attendance, especially at the Saturday evening Mass being lower than the rest of the year. Certainly we must ask if it is worth asking supply priests to come especially for Saturday night when the cost of their fees and expenses is more than the collection received at that Mass. Please note that this is not a done deal and there will be no change in 2019, but it would be worthwhile thinking through our needs now, so that we can make decisions about what we may do in future years. This summer we will maintain our year long pattern, but it is only fair that we have an open discussion as to if this is suitable for purpose.

We also had some discussion of Advent and Christmas 2019 at the PPC. Our hope is to have an Advent Children's event, an event for readers around Bible Sunday, An afternoon of prayer and recollection which will include the opportunity of Sacramental Reconciliation, and the usual series of Christmas services: Early evening Children's Vigil Mass, Mass of Night,, 9 am and 10:30am Mass of Day

Some flexibility of timing Mass of Night: For last couple of years 9:30pm Mass preceded by Carols, Some have asked could it be earlier, some would like it later. With all the other Masses of

Christmas, I wouldn't want it to be very much later and I would want it to be clearly a Mass of the Night rather than the Mass of middle of the evening. But a decision will be made at the next PPC, so any input welcome.

The final event in our Centenary Year will be the feast of St Thomas of Canterbury, which does this year fall on a Sunday. We shall be deciding in the autumn, the best way of celebrating that.