

# **Tynemouth Priory Partnership Development Group.**

Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017

**Present:** Mgr. Andrew Faley; Frs. Martin Stempczyk, VG., Chris Hughes, John McElhone, David Smith; Deacon Terry McGann; Ian Pearson, Andrea Hall, Joe James, Sheelagh Cassidy, Bill Crumbley, Andy Merchant, Terry O'Brien, Lynne O'Hare, Michael Thompson, Michael Wade. (16)

**Apologies** for absence were received from Theresa Anderson, Pat Brennan, Andrew James, David Leane, Rebecca Leighton, Damian O'Connor. (6)

**Minutes** of the previous (15<sup>th</sup> November) meeting were accepted.

Parish representatives had been asked to present a brief analysis of the strengths and challenges within their parish. In view of the fulsome responses, they were subsequently asked to send a précis of their report to the Secretary for assimilating. A digest of these written responses is appended to these minutes.

The representative from St Thomas More Academy offered to add a similar presentation in respect of that body. This was welcomed. **Action: AM**

It was proposed that the PDG should hold a (half) Day of study and reflection, and that Amy Cameron should be invited as lead speaker. **Action: IP**

Ian Pearson reported back from the meeting of the Chairs of Partnerships: this is to constitute the new Council of Laity.

**Finance:** Mgr Faley reported back from the Finance Committee meeting which had immediately preceded this PDG meeting. A bank account / mandate are to be initiated, and the Committee is to meet four times per year.

**National Eucharistic Congress.** Mgr Faley gave advance notice of this event, to be held in Liverpool in September 2018 under the title "Adoremus". Each Partnership is asked to send 19 representatives, of which two should represent our youth.

**Reduction in number of Sunday Masses.** Wallsend had already decided its response to the Bishop's requirement, and North Shields will do so in January. It was stressed that decisions on changes have to be made with sensitive regard to the needs of the entire Partnership in respect of geography, timing, and availability of priests. There was extensive discussion on how the Partnership could best be served in this respect.

Date of next meeting: (Feb) – to be announced, pending decisions on the Study Day with Amy Cameron.

Appendix: 'Strengths and Challenges' follows below.

# Tynemouth Priory Partnership Development Group

Appendix to the minutes of 20 December 2017

## Analysis of Strengths and Challenges

*Parish reps were asked to give a brief statement of their parish's strengths and challenges. The following is a summary digest of what was reported.*

Varying numbers of committed parishioners are active in various ministries and forms of service; some social activities draw others together.

Parishes are welcoming and outward-looking communities; families & children; service to sick & housebound; Community involvement.

Laities are becoming increasingly involved in pastoral service (Catechists, Children's Liturgy, Home Communion, bereavement support) and taking on leadership roles in both liturgy and pastoral care.

Some but not all parishes have a good age spread.

Adaptable buildings; adjoining chapels;

Good Catholic schools; one Academy/High School unites the partnership

Letting of Church premises produces income.

Some congregations are spontaneous and generous in identifying and supporting charities.

### **Challenges:**

Overall Mass attendance in decline; 'grey decay' in some but not all parishes.

Majority of attenders content to be passive recipients.

Tendency for the 'usual few' to (be left to) take on responsibilities).

But also, some tendency for 'do-ers' to be possessive of their role and function.

Lack of lay succession planning.

For many, the minimum (Sunday Mass) is enough. (Mass attendance viewed as an obligatory weekly chore rather than a (daily?) opportunity.

Letting of Church premises to outside groups can limit church-related activities.

'Leakage' from the Catholic schools.

Sporting & other activities compete with weekly Mass attendance for young families.

Perceived lack of youth involvement in parish activities.

Some reluctance to accept leadership other than from clergy.

Invisible frontiers between different congregations in same parish.