



St Mary's Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th February 2025

Attendees:	Fr Antony	Leon Jackson	Judy Chen
	Aisosa Ero	Irene Ero	Chuz Eberendu
	Ibidun Eberendu	Mitchelle Mbaeri	Nick Wibberley
	Pat Barber	Lisa O'Hara - Minutes	

1. OPENING PRAYER AND WELCOME

Fr Antony welcomed and thanked everyone for coming, acknowledged absentees.

2. APOLOGIES – Antoine Kodjo, Rob and Francisca Dunbar, Neville Fernandes

3. AOB – before the meeting, Fr asked if anyone had Any Other Business. Nick raised something which was discussed later in the meeting.

4. REFLECTION FROM *SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM*

Fr Antony gave a brief explanation of this initiative, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which was approved at the Second Vatican Council in 1963 – to revise the liturgical texts so that the congregation could participate more fully, thus deepening their worship and spiritual life. Father asked the council to share their thoughts and any ideas on how we can foster “Full, Conscious and Active Participation” so that each member of the congregation can encounter Christ. The council reflected on this and agreed upon the following:-

- a. **SILENCE** – It was suggested we give sufficient silence:
 - At the beginning of Mass
 - Penitential Act
 - End of each reading and before proclaiming “The Word of God.”
 - After the Homily
 - At the end of each Prayer of the Faithful
- b. **LEARNING MASSES** during the Mass – this is why... Fr Antony can explain.
- c. **NEWSLETTER INSERTS** – to go alongside the Learning Masses.
- c. **MICROPHONE** – a cantor to lead the responses to prayers and readings
- d. **SCHOOL CATECHESIS** – ask the school to teach the children about the Mass
- e. **MASS CARDS** – Fr to obtain Order of Service Mass cards for the congregation.
- f. **ST PAUL's** to organise four learning sessions a year.

5. EVALUATION AND SUGGESTIONS

Fr Antony asked each representative from each Mass if they had anything they wished to discuss. He added that he is very pleased and grateful for the support of all the Sacristans for all the Masses. He believes everything is very well organised and thanked them for their continued commitment and reliabilities.

- a) **Sat 6.30pm Mass** – Irene, Aisosa and Lisa – usually goes quite well, straightforward.
Precious Blood Distribution – Fr Antony explained he would delay this until after Easter as he has organised Retreats on the Sundays. Furthermore, he would like to ensure certain protocols and adequate training were adhered to. The council agreed the training will take place on Monday 24th March 2025.
- b) **Sun 9.00am Mass** – Leon, Chuz and Ibidun were asked. Welcome ministries are brilliant, Rob organises everyone very well, altar servers, choir, Micah on the organ – seem to be going very well. Ibidun – the church is in sections, people at the back not really participating. Children's liturgy has not taken up as well as it was attended to before covid.
- c) **Sun 11.30am Mass** – Nick and Mitchelle. Antoine is fantastic, the choir is fantastic, the altar servers, everything is really beautiful. Church is vibrant and full by the Offertory time.
 - i. Wheelchairs – it was highlighted that should there be more than three wheelchairs, then the front pew would be removed .
 - ii. Singing – whilst beautiful, Fr acknowledged that the final hymn need not always be a Marian hymn. He suggested something more joyful.
- d) **Christmas and New Year** – all services went smoothly, and Fr Antony was very grateful for everyone's efforts.

6. PLANNING FOR THE FORTHCOMING CELEBRATIONS

a. Lenten Season

- i. **Retreat Days** Fr Antony explained that he has organised the following Retreats throughout the Lenten and Easter season, which will take place in the church between the 9am and 11.30am Masses (10.00am – 11.00am):-
 - Lent week One (March 9th) Bishop Pat Lynch
 - Lent week Three (March 23rd) Bishop Paul Mason
 - Lent week Four (March 30th) Fr Chris Connor
 - 7th week of Easter (1st June) Canon Gerard Bradley
 - In addition, Fr Milton Jacob will lead five Lenten Retreats via Zoom at 8.30pm on each Thursday during Lent (March 13th, 20th, 27th and April 3rd, 10th).
 - Archbishop John Wilson will be offering the 11.30am Mass on Sunday 25th May and meeting the parishioners in Hartley Hall afterwards.

ACTION – Fr Antony to produce for the newsletter a short account of each member of clergy leading the retreats.

It was suggested that shorter Retreats be introduced on Saturdays, or after the Mass. Also, the possibility of Zoom retreats. A pilot programme was discussed, but nothing was arranged.

- ii. **Stations of the Cross** Will take place every Friday evening after the 7.00pm Mass. They will be led as usual by six different groups within Holy Cross:

Three Communities, Altar Servers, Choir, Children's choir. Leon advised the council that the Confirmation group will be doing this next year.

b. [Palm Sunday](#)

- i. Fr Antony has purchased palm plants for new families in the parish. Families who took one last year have been asked to bring them back to church (newsletter refers).
- ii. It was acknowledged that we will be using the new missals this year. The text is different so we must ensure that the people who will be reading throughout Holy Week will receive the readings early so that they can prepare properly.

ACTION - A training session will be arranged.

- iii. The 6.30pm Mass will start at the back of the church. The 9.00am and 11.30am Masses will start in the car park.

c. [Maundy Thursday](#) - Mass at 7.00pm, watching until midnight with prayers.

d. [Good Friday](#) - The Passion will be at 3.00pm. During the Veneration of the Holy Cross - the Cross with the Relic will be used.

e. [Easter Vigil](#) - 9.00pm

There will be the usual two Masses on Easter Sunday at 9.00am and 11.30am.

f. [Divine Mercy Sunday](#) falls on 27th April - An additional Mass will be at 3pm.

g. [Pentecost](#) - International Day.

h. [Corpus Christi](#) - All Readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) will be expected to attend a Retreat organised for Saturday 21st June (the day before). Then at all Masses that weekend, The EMHCs will renew the commitment to their ministry.

Mitchelle asked if we could organise a procession. It was agreed that we should ask the council first to get permission.

ACTION Ibidun, Chuz and Nick to follow up on this.

Judy suggested the EMHCs light candles before Mass.

7. From the Suggestion Box

Only one suggestion was received which Father read out to the group. "Dear God, please send me a sheep. I love sheep. Amen." Obviously from a child.

8. AOB

Nick asked for clarification of Adoration and Confession. Fr Antony confirmed that both are on Fridays at 6pm for one hour, plus Confessions are available on request. Nick then asked if there could be a short Adoration before some Masses. It wasn't decided whether to go ahead with this or which day would be selected to do this.

Altar Servers - it was raised that the Altar Servers should have their own Retreat, in addition to the Rally in May. They should also have more regular training, especially before the major liturgical events.

It was highlighted that there will be a walking pilgrimage in the summer.

Fr Antony thanked everyone for attending, acknowledging also how pleased he is with how the parish is working together. There are some shining stars who work tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the Masses:- Antoine Kodjo, Leon Jackson, Nick, Jidechi Eberendu and Micah Jackson to name a few. In addition, he is very pleased with the new, younger readers.

Nick also wanted to acknowledge thanks to Simon George, who after sadly losing his wife has thrown himself into music and supporting Holy Cross parish.

Fr also mentioned that he is working with three parishioners who are working towards becoming Deacons:- Chuz, Nick and Neville.

Ibidun asked for our prayers as she has recently been enrolled as a Foundation Governor at one of the local Catholic schools. We wish her the very best as she works with the school.

9. THANKS AND CONCLUDING PRAYER

Fr Antony thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their contributions. The meeting ended with a concluding prayer.