

CLUSTER PARISHES TOGETHER

Meeting held on 27th February 2016 in The Sacred Heart Halls, Lauriston

The inner city cluster parishes are: St Albert's George Square, St Columba's Newington, St Mark's Oxfords, St Patrick's Cowgate, St Peter's Morningside and Sacred Heart Lauriston.

The number of parishioners attending were: 6, 13, 24, 21, 10 and 22. Total: 96

Those attending were organised into nine groups and followed the instructions laid out on pages 4 to 9 in the Cluster Parishes Together Handbook. Each group took notes and a statement of consensus recorded.

SUMMARY OF CONSENSUS FROM ALL GROUPS

FOCUS ON: WHAT WORKS WELL

LITURGY: What is currently shared in liturgical celebrations in the cluster?

- Sunday Mass times scheduled so as not to clash
- Weekday masses available at different times in different parishes
- Penitential Services
- Parish Safeguarding Training (Organised at diocesan level, delivered in parishes. There is the flexibility to attend a meeting in any parish.)
- Marriage Preparation
- Children's sacramental preparation: Baptism, Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist
- Provision for sacramental preparation for children not attending Catholic schools
- RCIA
- Joint services for the sick, elderly and housebound
- Devotional Mass in honour of Venerable Margaret Sinclair first Tuesday of the month
- First Sunday of the month Adoration and Worship after 4.30 pm St Patrick's
- Holy Days and Feast Day masses celebrated in schools

COMMUNITY: What joint community action takes place in the cluster?

- Justice and Peace Groups shared events
- St Peter's 'Youth Rock Group' open to all young people in the cluster
- Lunch Club for the Elderly (St Patrick's and Sacred Heart) open to all
- St Mark's 'Men's Breakfast Group' meeting monthly, open to all
- St Columba's 'Men's Group' held in the evening once a month, open to all

- St Columba's 'Tuesday Club' every week for the elderly, mainly ladies open to all
- Newman Association, Edinburgh Branch
- Green Issues, Climate Change, Eco Congregations
- Pro Life
- Activities for the community initiated by the local schools
- Prayer Groups
- Jesuit Lecture evenings

SERVICE: What joint opportunities for service are shared in the Cluster?

- St Vincent de Paul in many parishes
- Outreach to the elderly at home and in Nursing Homes
- Communion to the Sick at home, in Hospital and in Nursing Homes
- Holyrood H.S. and St Thomas Aquinas H.S. have the Caritas Award
- School events involve many parishes
- Mercy Homelessness Project at St Catherine's Convent, assisted by many from our cluster parishes and parishes beyond

It was recorded by many groups that we are not always aware of everything that happens in our own parish or in our cluster parishes. A heartfelt request for communication through a *Cluster Newsletter* – weekly or monthly, and/or *Cluster Website* to inform of events and activities.

FOCUS: SINGLE PARISH PROVISION

To explore what provision needs to remain in our individual parishes.

LITURGY: What parish liturgies need to be available in our separate parishes?
Why is it important that these remain separate from cluster provision?

- Sunday Mass, considered the most important part of parish life
 - ❖ It is a core of the community of the faithful
 - ❖ It gives a sense of identity with the community
 - ❖ It unites the parish in prayer
 - ❖ Some parish churches have a small capacity and could not accommodate a whole neighbouring parish
 - ❖ Travel to other parishes could be difficult but this could be provided for by a transport register for the parish or cluster

- Eucharistic Service/Service of the Word is important because
 - If a priest is absent or ill, it would ensure that parishioners are still able to pray together as a community and receive the Eucharist
- Weekday mass
- Children's Liturgy
- Catechists
- Funerals
- Celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Matrimony are important because
 - ❖ It gives a sense of belonging to a parish by being initiated into that community
 - ❖ It encourages parishioners and reaffirms their faith
 - ❖ It brings new life to the parish
 - ❖ It increases the opportunity of participation in parish life in the many services needed to run a parish: Parish Pastoral council, Sacristans, Altar Servers, Eucharistic Ministers, Children's Liturgy, Choir and Musicians, Passkeepers and Welcomers, Readers, Church Cleaners, Flower Arrangers, Repository, Communications by newsletter and website, Gift Aid, Maintenance and Fabric, etc

COMMUNITY: What community action needs to be centred on our separate parishes?
Why is it important that these remain separate from cluster provision?

- Each parish has its own Parish Council, Liturgy Team and Maintenance Team
- Coffee Mornings, Breakfast Groups ,Lunch Clubs
- Parish Clubs and various social activities
- Fundraising Activities
- Liaison with the local primary and/or secondary school
- St Vincent de Paul
- Justice and Peace
- Ecumenical Events - Community-orientated ecumenical groups/events are best done locally, as they can draw on and contribute to existing practical local relationships, particularly in areas where all the denominations are trying to build up a sense of Christian community in the locale. This includes the ecumenical World Day of Prayer.
- A primary concern is that the elderly in each parish must be provided for by familiar faces and when necessary, be transported to mass.

- A section in Parish newsletters could be used to inform about Cluster events.
- Transport for parishioners with mobility problems
- Greater use of technology – perhaps using a webcam to relay Mass from one parish to another when there is no priest available.

SERVICE: What opportunities for service need to be available in our individual parishes?

Why is it important that these remain separate from cluster provision?

- Communion to the Sick ministered by people they know
- Outreach to the elderly and infirm provided by familiar faces
- Prayer Groups
- Take the opportunity to avail of the various training sessions provided by Gillis in order to be of better service to your parish
- Fair trade
- Twinning with a Third World parish

There are widespread and considerable areas of expertise among parishioners. The Cluster Parishes Together study is a challenge and an encouragement for everyone to contribute to the on-going life of their parish, keeping it vibrant and viable, to identify with their cluster parishes by sharing in many activities and to participate in other local Christian events.