

# Saint Mary, Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church

28 Greenock Road,  
Largs KA30 8NE

## **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

*Membership: Maurice Anderson, Larissa Aron, Sandi Bray, Tim Bray, Christopher Clements, Lewis Docherty, Stephanie Fisher, Bridie Lamont, Celia Lewis, Mgr. Peter Magee, Morag McGrath, Edward Stewart, Luciana Stewart.*

**Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2023  
7.30pm**

### **1. Opening Prayer**

### **2. Sederunt & Apologies.**

Present: Larissa, Sandi, Tim, Christopher, Bridie, Fr. Peter, Morag, Edward and Luciana.

Apologies: Maurice, Lewis, Stephanie, Celia.

### **3. Parish Census. Update and next steps – Larissa.**

Larissa reported that the first phase of the parish census is complete. It was based on bulletin advertising, verbal prompts from Fr. Peter from the sanctuary, the availability of forms in the church porch and word of mouth. All of the data collected has been validated with the invaluable help of Maureen McMillan and is now ready to be handed over to Fr. Peter. On everyone's behalf, Fr. Peter thanked Larissa very much for the incredible amount of work she has done on this task.

This first phase has essentially been "in-house", reaching above all those parishioners who attend Mass regularly or who at least come into the church from time to time for a visit. It's now time to look outward and to try and reach unchurched Catholics. The Electoral Register records many more self-identifying Catholics than the number who actually attend church. The current Scottish Catholic Directory estimates 1,500 Catholics in Largs alone (Mass attendance at weekends is roughly 230, if we include those who attend the Monastery). So, without coercing anyone, it seems appropriate to at least try and reach out to the many others within the wider jurisdiction of the parish to show concern and interest, if nothing more.

There are several steps that can now be taken. A first is to compare the new database with the old one and then contact by post those on the old who do not appear in the new. A second is to put an appropriate ad in the local newspaper with an online link to the census form and to indicate that hard copies can be obtained in the church porch. A third is to invite the various parish groups to consider contacts they may have with lapsed Catholic friends and invite them to fill out a form. This, of course, can also be done by any parishioner. A fourth, for better weather, is to ask for volunteers to undertake a carefully planned door-knocking campaign.

#### **4. Eucharistic revival of the parish. Update – Fr. Peter:**

- Life in the Eucharist (LITE) & visit to the parish in October

The PPC meeting was taking place on the vigil of the arrival of LITE for the Triduum of celebrations around the Feast of Blessed Carlo Acutis. Fr. Peter conceived of this Triduum as a form of “watering” with fertile waters the mustard seed of the Eucharistic Revival. At the time of writing, the Triduum is now completed. For those who were able to participate in the events, it proved to be very beneficial, thought-provoking and inspiring. The hope is to maintain contact with LITE to develop our cooperation with them in order to help the embryonic revival to grow. LITE is a group of committed lay Catholics who work with the Blessed Sacrament Fathers in St. Columba’s parish in Glasgow to promote faith and devotion to the Eucharist.

- Eucharistic Adoration

The practice of adoration on weekdays and before the Saturday Vigil Mass, once per month, now seems well-established. Extra ad hoc hours of exposition will be called in response to events, both local and international, that seem to require a special collective effort of prayer. Friday evening adoration during Lent and Advent will continue. The session of adoration before the 10am Sunday Mass was discontinued due to the busy activity which precedes this Mass. There was not a sufficient ambience of recollection conducive to adoration. It is important not to have adoration for the sake of it but to ensure the appropriate conditions.

- Cenacle

So far, the Cenacle has only met once, but a second meeting is due in the coming days. Its purpose is to pray its way into the Lord’s will for the Eucharistic Revival, under Bl. Carlo’s patronage. It’s a bit like the gardener trying to tend to a small mustard seed to ensure it’s given the proper conditions to grow. As a reminder, the Cenacle is a group of parishioners invited by Fr. Peter to pray before the Blessed Sacrament and then to meet to discern and discuss the direction of the Eucharistic Revival as the Lord would seem to desire it. It is one small example of synodality.

#### **5. Youth ministry update – Edward & Luciana.**

The Youth Hub is doing very well and has welcomed many from the new P7 at St. Mary’s. The method is largely to help the young people feel first that they belong and then to feed them appropriately with the Word. There is always trial and error in adapting to the specific needs of those who attend, but things are certainly going in the right direction. There have been a few more adult helpers with the required PVG’s which has helped ease the strain and make the experience more positive for everyone.

#### **6. Primary school update – Stephanie.**

In Stephanie’s absence, the PPC examined the “Standards and Quality Report” of June 2023 which she had kindly forwarded on. Everyone was pleased to see that two of the four self-assessed Quality Indicators scored as “very good” (“Ensuring well-being, Equality and Inclusion”; and “Raising Attainment and Achievement”) and expressed its encouragement as regards the other two marked as “Good” (“Leadership of Change”; and “Learning, Teaching and Assessment”).

It was suggested that the “Vision” statement of the school could benefit from more explicit Catholic input since, as it stands, it could be the vision of any kind of school. In Catholic teaching, the purpose of the Catholic school is to nurture and mature the children in the knowledge and love of Christ and in the practice of the Catholic faith, so as to prepare them to witness to Christ in their lives. While the school does certainly seek to do that, it would be good to have it reflected in the Vision statement. The declared values of the school are very positive: “faith, compassion, ambition and respect.” While it is certainly good to be open to children of all faiths and none, it is important to sustain clearly the specific identity of the Catholic school, its values and its vision. Where Catholic values are stronger, education only benefits.

Everyone expressed great satisfaction at the presence of the children at church for Mass from time to time, and also that they are involved in reading at Mass on the first weekend of the month. Fr. Peter noted that the idea has been there for a while to have class groups come occasionally to the 10am weekday Mass. Afterwards, he would speak with the children about religious matters. He hopes that in some way the children can be introduced to adoration of the Eucharist. These are matters for discussion with the school, while respecting the demands of its own curriculum.

#### **7. Altar servers – Lewis.**

In Lewis’ absence, Fr. Peter informed everyone that we had 5/6 new servers signed up and that we had had a first practice for most of them in the church. Due to pending holidays, the next practice won’t be until 23<sup>rd</sup> October. It is probably going to be nearer Advent before they are ready to serve Mass.

#### **8. Parish Festival, 2024: 16<sup>th</sup> September (Feast of St. Ninian) to Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September (Solemnity of St. Mary, Star of the Sea) – Celia.**

In Celia’s absence, Fr. Peter first of all thanked her for being so willing to take on once again the coordination of the Festival. Celia has already made contact with both St. Mary’s Primary and with Largs Primary, since Fr. Peter wants the Festival to have both an ecumenical flavour and the involvement of our children and young families. A dinner-dance has been booked (details not at hand). Celia informs that no-one has yet come forward with any new ideas or suggestions, apart from those noted below.

Sir James MacMillan has kindly agreed once again to enhance the Liturgy of the first Sunday of the Festival (September 22<sup>nd</sup>) with input from the Academy of Sacred Music based in Glasgow.

Some parishioners may know that during lockdown, Fr. Peter often played music over the sound system by a US evangelist singer, Fernando Ortega (e.g., “What wondrous love is this, O my soul” and “O God, you are my God”, which is still used for funerals). A Millport parishioner, Andy Gallagher, suggested to Fernando that he “get himself to Scotland”, so it looks as though we might have him with us to play at our Festival!

Fr. Peter will make verbal appeals to parishioners to step forward as soon as they can so that we can get a programme of activities in place. Time passes quickly.

#### **9. Various – Fr. Peter: a) new signage at the front of the church; b) buildings’ inspection; c) Ecumenical Service, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024; d) Parish Social Committee?; e) parish group reports.**

It has been difficult to identify companies to offer us ideas on new signage at the front of the church. One company has now come forward, but we will persevere in seeking others.

A building inspector has now been hired and will come and do a root and branch inspection of our three buildings later in the year or early next year.

St. Mary's will host the Ecumenical Service to mark the Sunday which falls during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

The parish used to have a Social Committee and the idea has been floated again recently by different parishioners. The PPC agreed that Fr. Peter might look into this since it is an important part of parish life.

Fr. Peter asked all parish groups to submit a brief report to him to be shared with the membership of the PPC. His idea was, first, to show how much is going on in the parish, but also to see if any new ideas might spring from a reading of these reports side by side.

One proposal is to see if we can introduce the "Minnie Vinnies", i.e. an involvement of the school children in the work of the SVDP. Another is to try and pursue some kind of link between the children and the sick and housebound.

Fr. Peter asked the question: how might the Eucharistic Revival be "mainstreamed", i.e. become a common feature, of the parish groups? He will invite each group to consider this, insofar as its activities make it a realistic possibility.

An edited copy of the reports will soon be made available on the parish website. There is too much text to provide hard copies.

#### **10. AOCB.**

There was no item under this heading.

**11. Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> 2024 at 7.30pm.**

**12. Closing Prayer.**