

## St. Mary's Leyland

### Parish Council

#### Meeting 4th March 2015

**Present :** Fr. Jonathan, Fr. Paul, Alex Anthony, Edward Almond, Ann Ward, Gaye Beirne, Pauline Strachan, Lesley Raven, Celia Neill, Fr. Stephen, Christine Lemmon ( Chair)

**Apologies:** Sister Veronica, Peter Baron, Sue Mills, Jeremy Watson.

**Prayer :** Led by Pauline Strachan

**Minutes :** Amendments required to minutes from previous meeting noted. We changed the minutes so that it was the reader who would announce the Way of Life initiative at mass each Sunday.

#### Parish Events:

- Parish Dinner
- Living Joyfully Liverpool
- S. Ribble Catenians' "Laugh Expectancy"
- Appointment as Eucharistic Ministers of five St. Mary's High School pupils
- Fr. Martin's Funeral
- Annual Mission of Columban Fathers
- Marriage and Family Life Meetings
- Ash Wednesday and Lent
- Focolare Community Meeting

**Way Of Life :** Edward commented that there had been little feedback from parishioners regarding this initiative, an outcome that the group felt was somewhat disappointing but the initiative was important and should continue in its present format. We discussed the best way to use the W.O.L. book with a decision taken to move the latter to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel with hopefully greater ease of use for parishioners. Also we discussed others ways to elicit a response from parishioners which will be explored by the small Way of Life committee with Sister Veronica and then presented to the PPC next time.

**Initiative for the "lapsed":** This was introduced at 6pm mass Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February and subsequent masses. Fr. Jonathan outlined the historical background that prompted this initiative dating back to the 1990's Building Bridges Of Hope. At that time we realised our aim should not be just the lapsed but all people who might be influenced by our parishioners whoever they may be. In that group the lapsed are not to be neglected and this initiative is to help us to focus on this particular "sub-group" among all those with whom we would like to share the good news. Discussion followed as to who the "lapsed" are, and the wider context of lapsed including discussion as to the reasons why Catholics are not attending our church. This included a consideration of whether lapsed find mass "life-giving" enough. Ann volunteered that they may be attending other churches and reasons were discussed. On 19-3-2015, St. Joseph's Day, there is exposition and the lapsed will be prayed for. Lesley suggested that it maybe be more appealing to invite lapsed to the next social event to "break the ice" in a less formal setting.

**Easter :** Fr. Jonathan reminded all that this is the most important time of the year in the church's calendar. This Easter also significantly marks the end of the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebrations. Discussion followed

regarding the events planned for Good Friday onwards with more detail to follow in future bulletins. Fr. Jonathan stated that £10 000 had been raised for Guinea Bissau and that he had seen various photographs from the latter. Negotiations were currently taking place to possibly set up a link via Skype during the 10:30pm Easter Sunday mass.

**A.O.B.:** Tim stated there will be a Knights of St Columba Parish Dinner Dance at Leyland Hotel 7.00pm for 7.30pm on 8-5-2015.

Edward told the group that a previous Parish Council member had had a very positive letter published in the Leyland Guardian praising the exemplary behaviour of pupils from St. Mary's High School.

There was a reminder that copies of the letter written by the Catholic Bishops of England were still available in church.

### **Adverse Publicity about events in the parish.**

The council members had opportunity to reflect and be informed about the incident, involving Fr. Hilary Nwadei, a Nigerian Priest, prior to his departure for Nigeria for Christmas on 12 December 2013.

A person who comes into the Priory house had been subject to sexual assault by Fr. Hilary. The matter was immediately brought to the attention of Fr. Jonathan and the Safeguarding Department of the Archdiocese, who informed the police.

Procedures were also put in place to support the victim through a very difficult period, who at that time did not wish police to press charges.

Fr Hilary returned in January 2014 to collect his personal belongings and to recommence study at UCLAN. However at this point in time, the victim had reappraised her position and requested the police to investigate the matter.

The Police made a number of attempts to speak with Fr. Hilary, but he left England later that month returning to Nigeria to be with his dying father.

Extensive attempts by the Archdiocese and Lancashire Police were made to encourage Fr. Hilary to return to England to answer the charges against him. When it became clear that he was not going to return, Lancashire Police sought the cooperation of the UK Border Agency, who placed a marker against Fr Hilary. This effectively meant that should he return to the UK he would be arrested for interview by Police on the charges against him.

Fr. Hilary was subsequently arrested in transit at Heathrow Airport in December 2014 on a flight from Nigeria to USA and held in custody. He was subsequently convicted in February 2015 and sentenced to eight months prison for sexual assault. On completion of the sentence he will be deported from the UK.

In line with the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures of the Church all the relevant authorities within the Church have been informed of Fr. Hilary's offence and conviction.

**Next Meeting :** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 7:30pm

**Chair Person:** Tim Sullivan

**Prayer:** Celia Neill