

St. Thomas More Church, Hartley Wintney

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 14th February 2008

Present:

From St Thomas More:

Geoff Jennings (chairman), Margaret Jennings, Anne Stanley, Carole Johnson, June Walsh, Claire Baldwin, Pat Paul, Ruth Hudson, Paula Simcoe, Marian Sandle, John Marcotti (minutes)

From St Swithun's:

Fr Dominic Adeiza, Deacon Dave Morgan, Anne Lambkin

Apologies: Janine Kilroy

1 *Mass provision*

The sole agenda item of this meeting was to discuss the new proposals for Mass provision. Father Dominic explained the background to the proposals. So far as they concerned our two parishes, St Thomas More and St Swithun's were to be clustered together under the care of Fr Dominic. Each Sunday Fr Dominic would celebrate three Masses at St Swithun's and one at St Thomas More, and the purpose of this meeting was to determine what time would be suitable for the Mass at St Thomas More.

Geoff explained that when we used to have Mass at 9 o'clock on Sunday mornings the church was usually full. When the time was changed to 8:30 we lost some of our young families, but even so, attendances were reasonable. Since switching to Saturday evening attendances have plummeted; we have now lost all our young families and many of our elderly parishioners. We would therefore prefer a family-oriented mass on Sunday morning, preferably at about 9 o'clock.

There was a suggestion that the Mass at St Swithun's at 9 o'clock on Sunday could be replaced by one at 6:30 on Saturday evening, which would give a wider spread of mass times to the people at Yatley and would mean that a 9 o'clock Mass could be celebrated on Sundays at St Thomas More.

Fr Dominic pointed out that as attendance at the 9 o'clock Mass at St Swithun's was so much higher than could be expected at St Thomas More he was reluctant to inconvenience so many people by taking the 9 o'clock slot away from them and giving it to us. However, he was prepared to consider having a Mass at St Thomas More at 8 o'clock or 8:30, and moving the 9 o'clock Mass at St Swithun's to a time 1 hour later than the Mass at Hartley Wintney.

Fr Dominic asked whether we would prefer Mass at 8 o'clock or 8:30 on Sunday morning, for a trial 3-month period after which the decision could be revisited. The St Thomas More attendees unanimously voted for 8:30.

Fr Dominic will therefore propose this change to Canon David Mahy and also to the pastoral team at St Swithun's. Subject to approval, the new mass times would start after Easter.

2 *Any other business*

We have provisionally arranged that Fr Tim Jelf will celebrate Mass for us on Easter Sunday. The meeting expressed a preference for Mass at 9:30 on Easter Sunday, subject to Fr Tim's agreement. John will liaise with Fr Tim.

Pat Paul pointed out that we have some printed instructions for opening the church but none for closing it. These should include instructions concerning the sanctuary candle. Geoff will produce some.

Geoff stated that he had finally heard from Southern Electric about the cost of electricity for last year; we are £400 in arrears. He has arranged a monthly standing order of £85 to cover this year's payments and to repay the arrears.

Deacon Dave pointed out that some services can be performed by a deacon (for example, the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday). If we should need any such services we should request them at the pastoral area meeting.