

CLUSTER PARISHES TOGETHER FINAL REPORT

St Mary Magdalene, St Ninian & St Triduana, St Mary, Star of the Sea, St John the Evangelist, St Teresa of Lisieux

Introduction:

During 2016 and 2017 Parishioners from our five Parishes attended three meetings, drawing on the resources of the Archdiocesan 'Cluster Parishes Together Handbook'. The meetings followed on from the well-received visit of the Archbishop hosted on 13th Feb 2016 by St Mary Magdalene's on behalf of all our five Parishes. This report provides a short summary of the highlights from the meetings and discerned representation of the views of the cluster parishes in relation to the four questions prescribed by the Archbishop. Our report includes the agreed pastoral goals for the cluster to work together more closely in a spirit of mission and evangelisation.

Planning

The format of the three meetings was organised by the 'Cluster Planning Group' comprising the Priests and Parish Pastoral Council Chairs. This group met ten times - with an additional data gathering meeting - between January 2016 and March 2017, and further follow-up meetings are already agreed. For each "Cluster Parish Together" meeting the planning team incorporated feedback from the previous sessions. The meetings included time for faith sharing and small group discussions which were facilitated and scribed to ensure active participation and that all views were accurately captured. A format was devised that ensured Parishioners from all five parishes were represented at each small discussion group to draw on a wide range of experiences. The format of a joint celebration of 10am Mass followed by the meetings worked extremely well. Summaries of the notes from the three meetings were circulated to all Parishioners with the full versions made available on request. These summaries and full reports are available if required by the Archdiocese.

Attendance

The Cluster Planning Group was particularly encouraged that attendance increased from the first to third meeting. Around 70% of the total attended all three meetings. The table below provides a summary of the host Parishes and the breakdown per Parish that attended in addition to the Priests.

Meeting	Host Parish	Date	St Mary, Star of the Sea	St John The Evangelist	St Ninians'	St Mary Magdalene's	St Teresa's	Total attending
1	St Mary, Star of the Sea	June 18th 2016	31	28	38	12	9	118
2	Sts Ninian&Triduana	Oct 29th 2016	34	36	36	8	9	123
3	St Teresa of Lisieux	Feb 25th 2017	31	41	28	13	28	141
TOTALS			96	105	102	33	46	382

Individual Feedback

At the end of each of the three meetings attendees were invited to provide a single word summary of their experience and these are summarised in the images in Appendix 1. The responses have almost all been extremely positive and consistent across the three meetings ranging between 'informative', 'togetherness', 'positive', 'hopeful' and 'constructive'.

The views of the Cluster parishes

Q1 What is considered to be a fair and discerned representation of the views of the cluster parishes about what needs to be done together in pastoral provision?

From the discussions in meeting 1, opportunities for sharing best practice and coordinating activities within the cluster groups were identified as outlined in Table 1. The experiences of the Parishes of St. John's and St Mary Magdalene's working together under one Parish Priest provided useful insights. There was a strong desire to look at public transport between the five Cluster churches and where possible to coordinate service times to facilitate practical travel arrangements for people attending events in different parishes.

Shared Liturgical preparation & celebrations	Shared Community action	Shared opportunities for service
<p>General agreement to share preparation and celebrations for Lent, Advent and Christmas as well as exchanging ideas on best practice in each of the parishes.</p> <p>Widespread agreement to discuss the possibilities of sharing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacramental preparation for Marriage, Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation • Rotate First Communions/ Confirmations services across Parishes • Joint prayer services, sharing of Reconciliation services, Exposition, Feast Day celebrations and Pilgrimages • RCIA and Faith Formation • Training of Laity and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion • Coordination of Mass times • Preparation of couples for marriage 	<p>Widespread agreement to discuss the possibilities of sharing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of work and expertise of Justice and Peace Groups, Catholic Men's Society, Women's Guild • Spreading knowledge among Cluster parishes carrying out existing initiatives e.g. Monday Club (St Mary's), Tanzania Twende Pamoja (St John's), One World Group (St Ninian's) • Group action for outreach to refugees • Shared meetings for disabled groups • Outreach and Sharing activities for Cluster Youth Groups & events and encourage mutual involvement including exploring development of the Youth Person's Officer role as in St. Mary's Leith • Work closer with local Catholic Primaries and High School • Sharing contacts and ideas for Outreach to wider local communities and involving the Polish Community • Sharing ideas and best practice for Ecumenical development • Coordinating annual events e.g. May Fair, Christmas Fair etc. • Explore joint or shared Parishes newsletters, sharing of administrator email addresses and a separate website for the overall Cluster. • Share details of events, religious and social, across all parishes 	<p>Widespread agreement to discuss the possibilities of sharing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of training for leadership. • Share expertise in Bereavement groups and counselling • Build on current involvement of Cluster Parishes in Caritas Award attained by Holy Rood High school pupils • Share Saint Vincent DePaul activities – explore option to form a Group Council for SVDP joint action • Organise visiting the sick across the Cluster and integrate with hospital visiting • Rotation of an Open Door policy as at St Ninian's. – i.e. One Parish church open every day of the week. • Share Altar servers • Retain separate Parish pastoral Councils but have an overall coordinating group or be open to representatives from the other parishes in the Cluster

Q2 *What should continue to be focused on single parish provision for pastoral provision?* From the facilitated discussions in meeting 1, the areas that should continue to be focused on single parish pastoral provision were identified as outlined in Table 2. There was strong consensus that it was also important to maintain the identity and traditions of each Parish community. It was also agreed that ascertaining Canon and Liturgical Law on the provision of Sunday Communion services and Services of the Word would be a priority.

Individual Liturgical preparation & celebrations	Individual Community action	Individual opportunities for service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important to retain Sunday Mass, Parish marriages and funerals in all parishes to maintain parish and community identity • Communion services (2 – 3 days per week) in absence of a priest • Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament • Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should only visit within their own parish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary School events tend to be Parish based, therefore retain at Parish level • Ecumenical outreach tends to be parish based. • Social evening events • Having access to local Parish buildings within communities was considered to be an important factor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual parish initiatives should continue but could be opened to allow involvement of other interested parties in the Cluster • Care for elderly and housebound. • Prayer groups could be organised to meet on a rotational and regular basis • There were differing points of view on retaining separate

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share expertise and resources for Sacramental preparation but retain service within each parish to preserve community and identity eg. Baptisms could be Cluster prepared but performed in each parish • Parish based children’s liturgies 		<p>Parish Finance Committees. Some felt Finance could be organised on a Cluster basis and some felt that individual parish committees knew their resources better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding should be Parish based but coordinated at Cluster level
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Q3: Where you see signs and developments of vibrancy in your cluster parishes that may lead to new growth and life.

From meeting 2 there was consensus that the demographic of Parishes is changing and that there is a need to make churches more accessible e.g. via "Open doors" days and schools visits. There are possible benefits from sharing access to buildings across communities e.g. for parish social nights, shelters etc. The summary of the current finances shows wise stewardship across the Parishes [See Appendix 2]. From the discussions in meeting 3, signs and areas for potential developments of vibrancy were identified in seven key areas as outlined in Table 3.

Area	Signs and developments of vibrancy
Eucharist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is made to feel welcome • Active involvement of adults and children with good strong link between school and Parish • Involvement of laity in liturgy and invitation for all parishioners to be involved in roles/ministry • Link from Eucharistic celebration in Church to the sick and housebound e.g. recording of Mass on CD/DVD • Single combined Masses across Cluster Parishes [even if only occasionally] • Evangelisation through gathering in a social context after Mass e.g. over tea and coffee
Evangelisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming all members in informal ways to help them feel at ease • Open Doors / Church at St John’s for Lent and the longer term for people to come in to pray • RCIA – bringing people into church • Outreach to other countries – Justice and Peace, Tanzanian links via Parishes and schools • Legion of Mary
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement • Need leadership that is prepared, trusted and focused on tasks – but within the framework of pastoral supervision. • Encouraging new people to participate in groups and involving young people • Look at making participation more open with stricter rotation. e.g. maximum length of service on PPCs
Catechesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good integration of children’s sacramental preparation and liturgies in parish life • Adult catechesis present in Parishes • RCIA • Good on-going lively exchanges on matters of faith – open & honest- at all stages of faith development • More relevant training openly available
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good “live” understanding of what is needed and what is happening already across the five Parishes – examples include Mary’s Meals, St Vincent de Paul & Legion of Mary visits, Bethany Meals for homeless, Foodbank, Fresh Start collection and Fairtrade, Youth Worker (developing youth), Catholic Men’s Society , Justice and Peace, Bereavement group, Shared pilgrimages (e.g. to Santiago and for youth) • Ecumenical services with other denominations • Take example from other church practices e.g. other denominations; not just “do what we always do” • That the parishes “follow through” with sacramental preparation for children – Prayer partners. [Mindful of child protection etc.] • Social nights
Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewardship follow-on from leadership – encouraging people to become more involved. • Encourage people to realise that they have a talent that can be used in the Church

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple communities including children and youth active and using their different gifts • Integration through common tasks e.g. music ministry • Financial stewardship • Wellbeing of the people – not just the buildings
Overseas residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of cultures through religious and social practices • Inclusion of all parishioners in ministries - moving towards becoming one congregation • Shared cultural celebrations and joint Masses

Q4: Naming pastoral goals for the cluster to work together more closely in a spirit of mission and evangelisation. For the final part of meeting 3, everyone spent ten minutes reflecting on (i) What was new and learnt for the future? (ii) Possible future joint actions for the Cluster Parishes to undertake (iii) Emerging aims and goals. From the group discussions three joint goals were agreed which are specific, measurable, achievable and targeted for further joint action in the cluster. The goals fall into twelve key areas as outlined below; those highlighted in bold were nominated by more than 3 groups.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall plan for next steps • Communication and information sharing • Social activities and events • Greater participation by all parishioners • Sharing of resources eg. music groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith Formation • Joint events (social and spiritual) • Children and young people • Partnership working with other denominations / Openness to other faiths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach/ Justice and Peace sharing • Foodbanks • Lobbying and campaigns
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Following a review of all the group discussions from the meetings, the cluster planning group have prioritised the following pastoral goals for 2017-18, as a realistic combination of regular and special events, in order to work together more closely in a spirit of mission and evangelisation.

Theme	Proposed action
Children and Young People	A meeting between the Youth Worker at St Mary Star of the Sea and the Priests and parish representatives to be arranged to share best practice [by June 2017]
Joint events (social and spiritual)	Cluster Picnic at Nunraw on 21 May 2017 at 1pm Cluster Celebration Mass at St John's on 3 June 2017 at 10am The Cluster Group WWI Battlefields Experience - Mon 16th – Fri 20th April 2018
Faith formation	Consider sharing resources for Baptismal preparation Offer RCIA hospitality to the parishes without teams Consider a 'Retreat in Daily Life' and an Adult Faith Formation Course on Leadership
Mobilising more parishioners/ Communication and information sharing	'Cluster Corner' in the Newsletter for each parish Share links and cross reference the Parishes on individual website/ facebook etc.
Sharing resources	The St Vincent de Paul Groups could be invited to meet together occasionally

Summary The three Cluster meetings have allowed Parishioners from all five Parishes to come together to openly participate in these important discussions on the future of our Parishes and Archdiocese. The considerable planning and co-operation by the Priests and PPC chairs to ensure that the meetings were relevant, interesting and inspiring was reflected in consistently good attendance, open discussions and considerable engagement via the group discussions. Five key themes with distinct goals have been identified for further joint activity in the next twelve months building on the shared vision and sense of community. We all look forward to hearing about the next steps as we continue our journey in a spirit of participation and spiritual vibrancy.

APPENDIX ONE

MEETING ONE



MEETING TWO



MEETING THREE



APPENDIX TWO– Joint Resources (figures from 2016)

Category	St John's	St MM	St Teresa's	St Mary SS	St Ninian's	TOTALS
Parishioners	1,500	350	250	1,800	2,000	5,900
Active Apostolate	150	46	50	70	60	376
Community						E 100,000*a
Buildings	3	1	2	3	2	11
Condition	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Upkeep	20,798	15,193*b	2,500	26,354	7,000	71,845
Baptisms	28	5	6	25	25*c	89
RCIA	4	(incl. in St J)	0	5	1	10
Funerals	27	5	7	21	11	71
Marriages	15	1	1	6	0	23
Ave Mass attendance per week	290	113	150 +75 Polish	475	135+100 Polish	1,163 + 175 Polish
Operating Income	91,918	33,468	47,789	91,964	70,177	335,316
Operating Expense	77,650	19,960	43,738	77,562	67,688	286,598
Future Requirements	70,000	40,000*d	40,000	80,000*e	10,000*f	240,000

Footnotes

- a. Estimated population from 2011 National Census (Edinburgh Council Wards)
- b. St MM Upkeep high due to replacement of heating system
- c. St N's baptisms will increase as hitherto did not include Polish baptisms
- d. St MM has sufficient capital (including a loan of £295,000 to the Diocese) to fund estimated future requirements
- e. St MSS has a loan of £140,000 from the Oblates
- f. St N's has sufficient capital (including a loan of £38,000 to the Diocese) to fund estimated future requirements