

## SBSJ Parish Consultation – Summary of Responses - October 2012

The consultation exercise responses are summarised in this document. The full content of online submissions can be accessed on the parish website. Respondents offered a number of suggested actions to address the various issues.

<b>Reverence &amp; Respect</b>	
<p><b>Introductory Comments from Fr Michael Cooke</b>  <i>[based on Minutes of July Parish Forum]</i></p>	<p><i>There was unanimous concern and disquiet about the growing trend of a lack of reverence and respect in our churches. This is not only when we have large numbers of visitors (e.g. for baptisms, first communion and weddings). Some parishioners make unnecessary noise by talking and the inappropriate use of mobile technology also detracts from a prayerful and respectful atmosphere.</i></p> <p><i>The forum discussed a number of possible remedies and, subject to the outcome of a consultation exercise, all felt that this matter ought to be addressed promptly in the short term. Have you any suggestions about how we might create a more prayerful atmosphere in our churches, especially in the time immediately before our services begin?</i></p>
<p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Father to explore, through his homilies, the theological significance of the celebration of the Eucharist, in turn promoting reverence and respect for the Blessed Sacrament.</li> <li>2. On some Sundays, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament before Sunday Mass where it is explicit that the time is for silent prayer.</li> <li>3. Taize, Chant or other appropriate music to be played before Mass, again with it made clear that this is a time for silent prayer.</li> <li>4. Notices at the church entrances reminding worshippers of the need for silence and to switch off mobiles etc.</li> <li>5. Parishioners not wandering around church to 'chat' with others before Mass, no matter how well intended.</li> <li>6. Keep the doors into the narthex / Patmos Room closed, so it is clear that worshippers are 'entering church' and should be quiet.</li> <li>7. Keep administrative matters and discussions to a minimum. Can it wait until after Mass?</li> <li>8. Can we provide soft toys, prayer books etc for young children that relate to the 'Mass' environment? (Can we let parents know politely that it is not suitable for their children to be playing with mobile phones, games consoles or any toys deemed 'violent').</li> <li>9. To improve facilities for parents and young children to afford a quiet, appropriate retreat so that families feel included, but free from worrying if children are crying etc.</li> <li>10. To include a quiet prayer time after Holy Communion.</li> <li>11. SB – Hand out newsletters after, not before Mass, as it is a distraction</li> <li>12. SJ – Cease the practice of the whole congregation standing up for Holy Communion all at once which encourages noise and conversation approaching the Eucharist. Maybe adopt a modified 'bench by bench' approach, similar to that used on Good Friday.</li> <li>13. Take care that the actions to enhance reverence and respect do not discourage people (especially parents with young children)</li> </ol>

<b>The Future of St Brendan's Presbytery</b>	
<b>Introductory Comments from Fr Michael Cooke</b> <i>[based on Minutes of July Parish Forum]</i>	<p><i>The presbytery has now been empty for over four years and is clearly deteriorating. The meeting was advised of a number of local and diocesan conversations about possible uses, none of which have proved viable. One of the main sticking points has been the shared access to the site.</i></p> <p><i>However, the forum believed the presbytery was still a significant asset and demolition was not the preferred option. If anyone has any further suggestions for potential use of the presbytery they are encouraged to put this forward now since the diocese will want to revisit this issue in the near future.</i></p>
<b>Suggested Actions</b>	<p>The consensus of responses was that the presbytery be retained and redeveloped into a parish facility or centre affording meeting, social, office, kitchen and possibly some residential accommodation.</p> <p>Suggestions also included returning the presbytery to private residential accommodation either for sale, rental or as a home for an on-site caretaker / pastoral co-ordinator.</p> <p>Demolition was not favoured by respondents.</p>

<b>Sharing the Load</b>	
<b>Introductory Comments from Fr Michael Cooke</b> <i>[based on Minutes of July Parish Forum]</i>	<p><i>Discussion of this topic acknowledged the heavy workload I carry as parish priest of two parishes together with deanery and diocesan responsibilities. However, I was at pains to point out that the starting point for this should not be "because Father is too busy" but recognition of the call in Vatican II for laypeople to exercise their rights and responsibilities to play a more active part in the life and mission of the Church.</i></p> <p><i>There are a considerable number of roles that parishioners could and should take on in order to "share the load" both with the priest and with one another. Have you any ideas about what those roles might be and how people (perhaps including yourself) might be encouraged to take them on?</i></p>
<b>Suggested Actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and document a list of tasks that need to be done.</li> <li>2. Organise an event to recruit parishioners to undertake the tasks.</li> <li>3. Suggestions for new parish groups included 'a welcoming group' for new parishioners; a group to help with bereavement; a befriending group to perhaps chat with lapsed parishioners; a reflection group for parishioners who want to discuss and understand their faith on a deeper level.</li> </ol>

**Note: - Development of the Patmos Room** - One response was received. This matter is discussed elsewhere on the agenda.