

**Draft minutes of the meeting of the Parish Pastoral Councils of  
Saint Anthony of Padua, Melksham and Saint Edmund, Calne  
held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
at Saint Edmund's Church Hall, Calne.**

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Present: Father Vincent Curtis.  
From Saint Edmund's: Brigid Rodgers, (Chair), Tricia Davies, Elizabeth Hitchens,  
Kathleen Joyce, Christine Martin, Teresa Quinn, Paul Blake (Clerk).  
From Saint Anthony's: Anne Doyle, Mary Rooney,

Apologies received from: Tony Matthews, Helen Murphy. (Saint Edmund's).  
Linda Cassidy, Gay Harris, Gervase O'Donohoe, Sharon Pearce, Susan  
Whyte. (Saint Anthony's).

The meeting opened with a prayer at 7.00.p.m. followed by a scripture reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians.

Brigid Rodgers welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Minutes of the joint meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

These minutes were approved. The planned Healing Service did not take place but was replaced by the visit by Father Matt Anscombe on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023. This event was well attended.

**Catechetical preparation arrangements for possible Confirmations in 2024.**

Letters have been received from three people from the Melksham parish and six or seven from the Calne parish requesting Confirmation. A date for Confirmations to be celebrated in the autumn has been requested from Bishop's House but to date no reply has been received.

There are, at present, no specific catechists for a programme of preparation in either parish. Ways of identifying suitable catechists and the merits of the parishes working together were discussed. It was agreed that Paul Blake will arrange for an item to be placed in both parish newsletters seeking volunteers to help with a programme of preparation and Father Vincent will seek potential catechists by personal contact.

**Plans for joint prayer services in Advent.**

A joint prayer service for Advent will be held at Saint Edmund's at 3.00.p.m. on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Kathleen Joyce and Elizabeth Hitchens volunteered to organise this service. A joint service for Advent will be held at Saint Anthony's at 3.00.p.m. on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Anne Doyle volunteered to co-ordinate the organisation of this service.

**Reaction and responses to the diocesan day held on 7th October 2023 concerning the new Pastoral Areas.**

A report on this day has now been published and is available on the diocesan website. The synodal model of working in small listening groups was appreciated. No specific plans were made at the day itself, but it is hoped that members of the parishes within the various Pastoral Areas will now meet to agree a way forward, perhaps with the establishment of Pastoral Area Councils. A further diocesan day in connection with this will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

### **Initial thoughts on the 'Synthesis Report' from the first session of the Synod.**

Members discussed the content of this lengthy report in some detail noting some positive points and some obscure points. The wide consultation, the synodal way of working, and the involvement of lay persons, (men and women), was applauded.

Some of the specific items and proposals mentioned in the report were noted and discussed:

The role of women in the church.

The focus of the diaconate being service to the poor rather than a purely liturgical function.

The establishment of diocesan pastoral councils, and the necessity of parish pastoral councils.

A revision of the Code of Canon Law.

The importance of catechetical 'accompaniment' during sacramental preparation, including for the sacraments of marriage and ordination.

Acknowledgment that all the People of God participate in the '*senus fidei*' and this means all the baptised including those from other Christian traditions.

Developing the role of the Lector which may perhaps include preaching.

There was considerable discussion at the meeting on the role of women within the church and the possibility of women's access to the diaconate. It was noted that the Synod Report identified an urgent need for women to be able to participate in decision making processes. Father Vincent highlighted the distinction between the enlargement of the role of women within the church and the ordination of women to the priesthood.

The Synod itself was seen as a positive step building upon the work of the Second Vatican Council.

### **Any other business.**

It was agreed that in the future joint meetings would be held in the April and the September of each year.

### **Dates of next meeting.**

The next joint meeting will be held at Saint Anthony's Church Hall, Melksham, on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00.p.m.

The meeting closed with a prayer at 8.20.p.m.