

Pastoral Area Working Group 2

Meeting for St Austin's Parish held at Chaloner Hall, Wednesday 12th October, 2011

The meeting was attended by about 40 parishioners.

The introduction to the meeting followed the same programme as each of the other parish communities in Pastoral Area 2. Mike Fitzpatrick went through the draft proposals that had been given out the previous weekend at all Masses.

The following points were made and questions asked.

1) Concerns regarding the lack of priests in the future could mean difficulty in providing Requiem Masses but nothing has been mentioned at any of the PAWG meetings. How can we deny Catholic families this fundamental rite?

- *Mike said this had not been addressed at prior meetings of the PAWG.*
- *Fr Cassian explained this is a reality and it may be the case that lay people will be trained to carry out funeral services.*
- *Fr Alban explained that in Zimbabwe the situation is far worse and it was taken for granted that not everyone could have a Requiem Mass. We have to face these problems.*

2) If it's thought that phase 2 of the proposals will go ahead then why bother with phase 1?

- *Mike asked for an indication of approval for this possibility from those present and advised that the same point had been raised at the St. Francis meeting the previous evening.*
- *There was considerable support for moving straight to phase 2.*

3) Would that mean the closure of St. Austin's Church?

- *Mike advised that this was not in the proposals. If the Benedictines pulled out then St Francis and St Austin's would be looked after by the same priest but it would mean fewer Masses.*

4) Whilst changes are going to be painful, one of our monks here could become ill then what? Shouldn't we be planning and organising changes now, the Abbot needs to make a decision as soon as possible?

- *The potential for a problem of this kind was acknowledged but a comment was felt not to be appropriate at this stage. The concern raised would be passed on.*

5) No young people seem to attend these meetings and the young are our future!

- *Mike agreed with this point and expressed further disappointment that families who attend the 9.30 family mass had not shown support for this or the earlier PAWG consultation meeting. Their influence and involvement is vital for the future of the Parish.*

6) Is there a timescale for these changes?

Mike explained that some aspects of the proposals would come into effect fairly soon whilst others might come gradually, possibly sometime between 2013-2015. However, if agreements could be reached then the timescale for change might reduce accordingly.

The meeting closed with Mike announcing that he is stepping down from being PAWG leader for our area and thanked everyone for their attendance, questions and views. Fr Cassian thanked Mike for all his help and input over the last 18 months.

A prayer was led by Fr Cassian