

Weekly Message from Fr William for the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time 2023

Dear People of St Mary's, the Parish Pastoral Council meets this Monday. In every parish the PPC is an advisory body to the parish priest to assist him in the pastoral care and maintenance of the parish. In the ten years I've been your pp, the principal dimensions of our parish life that I've prioritized, and sought consultation on from the council, have been our celebration of the Liturgy, mutual care for one another in the parish community, and outreach to the wider world. The recent letter of Pope Francis on the celebration of the Liturgy, calling us once more to take on board the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, has given a renewed impetus to focus, in the council and in the parish more generally, on this central pillar of our parish life. It will continue to be an item on the PPC agenda as we go forward together with these reforms.

As for the composition of the PPC, I'm sure every parish has a different procedure for determining membership. Within six months of my time as your pp I reviewed the constitution of the PPC, as the constitution itself stipulates, and introduced the current procedure for determining membership. Five councilors are elected by the parish and five appointed by the pp. The elected councilors are elected, one each, from the five 'ministry groups' within the parish. This introduces and maintains a democratic element to the PPC, and at the same time creates a council in which the members already serve the parish in a particular ministry or capacity.

The PPC meets four times a year – February, May, September, November. For more information about the Parish Pastoral Council, including current membership and the minutes of recent meetings, see the parish website under Parish Life.

As well as being the Seventh Week in Ordinary Time, this week also sees the switch to the Season of Lent with Ash Wednesday. There will be two masses on Wednesday for those wanting to mark the beginning of Lent with Mass and the imposition of ashes. Also this Lent, I'm moving the Friday weekday mass from 9am to 7pm in case there are people wanting to get to a weekday mass but unable to make 9am due, for example, to work commitments.

This Sunday might be a good opportunity to give some thought to reviewing our personal Lenten undertakings. The Prophet Joel tells us each Ash Wednesday what it's all about. 'Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks – come back to me with all your heart.' It's an opportunity to think creatively about our Lenten resolutions, not to beat ourselves up or make life miserable for ourselves, but to choose in this holy season one or two small things that will help us to come back, and to come closer, to the Lord with all our hearts.

There will be an opportunity again at Mass this Sunday to donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee, specifically for the Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal, for the Pakistan Floods Appeal, and the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. You're welcome, if you want to, to donate to one or more of these DEC responses.



Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, 19th February 2023