

National Eucharistic Congress 2018

River of Life

Feedback from St. Simon Stock Catholic Church, South Ashford

The Pastoral

Talk about mass reminded us that mass is the centre of our faith. The Eucharist is summit and centre of Christian life. The church is active and not regressing or traditionalist but full of life and active in our time. Christ is a living bread and this knowledge impacts on our church's mission.

Only if we build up Eucharistic communities will we be able to teach the Eucharist.

We need to belong to a community that is welcoming, warm and vibrant.

The Practical

New initiatives:

1. CaFE parents of 1st Holy Communion children formation course;
2. Eucharistic ministers,
3. Opportunities for children in school to experience Eucharistic Adoration
4. Parish choir to use music as an evangelical tool that enables all the congregation to participate actively in the worship

The Spiritual

The whole weekend we had the feeling that God was with us. Not just when we were all gathered together on the three days at the congress centre but when we were away from the crowd. Very powerful.

1. Christianity is a way that focuses on 3 paths. 1 find the centre of our lives who is Jesus, 2 recognises that we are all sinners in need of God's mercy and 3 our life is not about us. From this we realised the relevance of sitting in front of Jesus that helps us to develop a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and brings us closer to him.
2. Mass is where heaven and earth meet. It is where God talks to us and we respond.

The Possible

1. Take the schoolchildren to attend Eucharistic adoration on the first Friday of the month in the parish church.
2. Review the current first Holy Communion programme to ensure that it makes the children truly aware of the presence of Jesus in a way that they can understand. The doctrine content of the programme should be such that it develops the child's personal relationship with Jesus.
3. Use the CaFE "First Holy Communion and Reconciliation Parents' course"
4. Meeting of all Eucharistic Ministers to review their ministry
 - 4.1. e.g. discuss holy communion for the housebound and hospitalised with following possible topics:

- 4.1.1. How to sanctify the time by using soft background music
- 4.1.2. Choice of scripture readings and length to suit communicant
- 4.1.3. Make them feel an integral part of the parish
- 4.2. Create a blueprint document of everything discussed to be made available to all ministers, current and future. Possibly make this meeting an annual event on the day when all Eucharist Ministers renew their commitment to the ministry.
- 5. Put details of the Pope's worldwide network of prayer in the weekly newsletter together with the current month's prayer intention and detail of the phone app.
- 6. Aid to the Church in Need: Use newsletter to encourage parishioners to attend an extra mass or adoration in the place of someone who cannot attend due to persecution or migration.

The Future

- 1. Ecumenism: Start small ecumenical groups in the parish meeting in private homes.
 - 1.1. A couple of parishioners invite local friends of other faiths to join their group.
 - 1.2. Meet every two months, each time in a different member's home.
 - 1.3. The hosting member decides the topic for the meeting e.g. a scripture reading to discuss, a speaker on a specific topic, discuss the current liturgical season.
 - 1.4. Our parish covers half of a town and numerous nearby villages so it would be good if each village or adjacent villages had an ecumenical group.
- 2. It would be great if parishes could find the opportunity to remind their members of the different parts of the mass and how they mesh together making the supreme form of adoration.
- 3. Establish a parish Eucharistic Adoration team.
- 4. As a parish of people from many different countries, look into the possibility of forming a women's group that will bring all sections together for prayer and socialising. The men in our parish have already done that.
- 5. Use café resources such as videos, for evening reflections or short courses.
- 6. Create an honesty library where parishioners can borrow religious books and also donate books.