

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO MASS TIMES AT ST WILFRID'S, YORK

Summary Report

The New Mass Times

Fr Richard submitted the following agenda item to the Bishop's Council on Tuesday, 14th October, 2014:

The Parish Priest of St Wilfrid's, York, would like to change the Sunday Mass times to Saturday evening at 6.15pm; Sunday morning at 8.30am, 10.30am (Family Mass), and 12 noon (Mass in the Extraordinary Form).

Permission was given at the Bishop's Council meeting that afternoon. From the weekend of 29th/30th November (the first Sunday of Advent) these will be the new Sunday Mass times at St Wilfrid's.

Additionally, from the same date, there will be Sung Vespers and Benediction at 6pm. There are already additional Mass times that increase the provision of the lunchtime Mass at 12.10 from Monday to Saturday.

The Consultation Process

The request had to be put in and considered quickly in order to meet the deadline for the Diocesan Directory and the National Catholic Directory. However, the matter had already been considered and agreed by the clergy of the deanery. There was then a consultation for about three weeks in the parish.

Copies of the responses to the parish consultation (with identifying data removed) will be available in the porch of St Wilfrid's Church from the weekend of 18th/19th October. They are filed in the order in which they were received. About forty replies were received. Some people joined together in responding. A small number asked that their responses should not be made available. It was decided not to make the responses available online as this consultation is really only relevant to those who come to Mass at St Wilfrid's regularly.

It is hard to judge from emails how many responses came from members of the congregation resident in the parish and how many from those who worship here from outside the parish. Almost all claimed to come to St Wilfrid's regularly and since St Wilfrid's has always drawn its congregation from beyond the boundaries of the parish this fact alone seemed to provide a reasonable claim to be heard.

Responses to the Consultation

The responses reflected a spectrum of different views including keeping the *status quo*. A majority of people supported the idea of having two Masses with different liturgical styles and there was a majority in favour of having the Family Mass at 10.30am. The most compelling reason given was the timing of the Park and Ride bus service into York, especially for those who have some role in preparing for Mass or welcoming parishioners and visitors.

There was more support among those who attend the 5.00pm Mass in the Extraordinary Form for keeping it at that time or having it at 11.30am. Clearly 11.30am would be impossible after a 10.30am Mass. This Mass draws its congregation from a wider area. Many people find 5pm in the winter a difficult time. 12 noon is not a very social time but it fits with the 10.30am Mass and also allows people longer to come and go long distances, especially important in the dark months.

Liturgical Styles

Parishioners were also asked to comment on the liturgical styles of different Masses, particularly whether there should be a quiet Mass without hymns or music at either the Saturday evening Mass or the Sunday 8.30am Mass.

There was a fairly even division of opinion on this, with some in favour of a quiet Mass and others in favour of keeping hymns at either or both Masses. In the interests of providing liturgical variety within the Church's discipline it was decided to have a quiet Mass without hymns at 8.30am on Sunday, the traditional time in the past for such a Mass. Given the diversity of views on this matter it will be kept under review.

As proposed in the consultation we will now press ahead with forming a Music Group for the 10.30am Mass and a Choir for the 12 noon Mass.

At the Family Mass there will be a wide variety of musical styles. The organ will continue to be used for the entrance and recessional music. The music group will play and lead the singing for the Offertory and at Holy Communion. There will be music that children are familiar with from school and well as some traditional hymns from the Catholic and English tradition. In accordance with the Vatican II Decree on the Liturgy (and subsequent instructions) there will be some exposure to Latin and simple chant, mostly in Advent and Lent. This is in keeping with the international congregation at St Wilfrid's and the increasing number of occasions when the church gathers together to worship with people from many nations. We need to be familiar with some of the music that should be known to all Catholics.

At the 12.00 noon Mass the choir will sing chant, classical polyphony and organ Masses according to the abilities of the singers we are able to recruit.

It is impossible to address all the issues raised by the consultation individually, or even to cover all the issues in this brief report. However there are two matters that should be considered:

- The provision of tea and coffee - or other similar events - for the parish or for charity after Sunday Masses. This should still be possible with the new timetable (the 10.30am Mass should be shorter than the present 11am Mass) and it would be good to hear from members of the congregation who would be willing to help with it.
- The need to recruit parents to help with the Children's Liturgy at the 10.30am Mass.

What Happens Now?

We have recruited Dr John Ridgeway-Wood as Director of Music for the Parish. He will have overall responsibility for Music and direct management of the choir for the 12 noon Mass and for Vespers and Benediction which will now take place at 6pm on Sunday evenings. He will also be the first point of contact for music for weddings and funerals. He will have a responsibility for recruiting musicians and for raising money to cover the costs of music in the parish.

Mrs Olga Czaplicka will recruit and train the Music Group for the family Mass and will meet regularly with the Parish Priest to decide the repertoire.

We will need to find time and space for rehearsal for all the musicians. There will be regular publicity to make people familiar with the new Mass times, including the additional Masses and services on weekdays.

It is never possible to satisfy everyone in a process like this. We are very grateful for the time people took to respond and for the large number who did. Please continue to make your views known. For the moment, though, it is important that (regardless of whether the outcome was what any individual member of the congregation wanted) we all work together to make the new schedule work. We want, through this, to draw as many people as possible to share with us in the joy and privilege of worshipping God our Father in the fullness of the Catholic tradition.