

Parish Pastoral Council Report

Annual General Meeting

1 June 2023

Our mission is to help our parish priest, Father Paul Friel shepherd our parish. In session, we discuss the overall global strategy of the parish, the health of our ministries and vision on new initiatives to enrich and equip our parishioners so that they may fulfill our Lord Jesus' great commission to go out and « make disciples ». (Matthew 28:19)

Over the past year, a great part of our discussion was over how to bring our parish out of the COVID years where parishioners largely stayed at home for mass, ministries met via Zoom (or not at all). We found some of our parishioners tentative about venturing out again to make physical contact with people not related directly to work, school or family. We turned the corner in 2022. Masses are filling again. This Easter saw for the first time the pews full with numbers reaching pre-pandemic levels.

Our goal in the Parish Pastoral Council this year was to rebuild a strong foundation so that are parishioners are equipped to fulfill Jesus' commission. We did this through focus on the Liturgy and Holy Traditions, encouraging events around the parish, activities encouraging engagement in the Holy Scripture and learning. This is done through ensuring support towards ministries who help to achieve this purpose.

Our team members are Father Paul Friel, Anna Berkeley, Michael Kavuma, Josephine Chrisadiningtias (Dini), Giovana Titus, Antony Fake, Karen Reyes, Robby Sam Toole and Sharon Ledermann. We met three times over the last year.

Liturgy and Praise

The Liturgy of the Holy Mass was fully in person over this last year with numbers coming back up as our returning parishioners came back to mass in person. The choirs have all returned with a new choir starting during the 10:00am mass. New altar servers are being trained as well as Eucharistic ministers and lectors. The Welcome committee who manages the ushers and greeters at mass has noted a decline in participants and is looking to recruit young talent next year and flowers adorn the alter thanks to efforts of many working tirelessly behind the scene.

Holy Traditions

Our church engaged once again in sacred traditions with the relaunch of Adoration of the Holy Eucharists on Saturdays during the period of Lent and up to the summer holiday. The Holy Rosary also gathers the faithful on Thursdays before Holy Mass. Father Paul also invited Father Jayson Gonzales OP to hold Simbang Gabi or « Churchgoing at night » a beautiful Filipino traditional novena of masses held just before Christmas. Masses were held in a mixture of English and Tagalog.

Events around the Parish

Events around the Parish House included a successful Welcome Weekend allowing new parishioners and old discover our parish and our ministries. Ministries set up tables outside of the Sunday morning masses to talk about their projects and encourage parishioners to get involved and serve.

Our parish is filled with so much richness brought forth from an incredible mix of cultures from every continent of our shared planet. This mix sharing one faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Streetfood Festival and the Barrio Fiesta were a wonderful and fun way for parishioners to mingle and enjoy some good food and entertainment outside after mass while getting to know other cultures.

Discipleship and Spirituality

Our hearts are filled with joy to see children returning again full time to the Parish House. Anna Berkeley and Sarah Mah did wonderful work over the year guiding their catechists and two hundred seventy students in the Sunday classes as well as twenty-four candidates through a successful Kairos retreat and Confirmation over Pentecost weekend. The service was presided over by Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu.

Our Ignatian Community led by Petra Lindner and her team continues to do powerful work in our parishioners' spiritual lives meeting every morning of the work week in communal prayer and monthly. We are grateful for their lenten booklets this year: « Lives to Inspire ». Five Spiritual Accompaniers completed the first year of their training in their two year program and are slated to finish the two year course this time next year.

A second Ignatian group led by Stephen Claffy and Patricia Laurie meet quarterly throughout the year at the Ecumenical Institute at Chateau de Bossey. Last year they hosted retreats under the theme « Living in the Light of Love in Times of Change ». They will be continuing their work this year exploring the topic of « Nurturing the Unity of our Human Family ».

Walking with Purpose continued on over the last year meeting once every two weeks Thursday nights. They worked through the book « Ordering your Priorities ». The ladies deepened their faith through scripture and praying for each other throughout the week. The topic of discussion was putting forward what is most important in your life and leading a life based in scripture where we want to engage.

Theology on Tap continues to go strong meeting at Mr. Pickwick's Pub in downtown Geneva blending a convivial gathering with talks on theology. This last years speakers included Fr. Gregory Pine O.P., Msgr. John Putzer and Fr. Carlos Ayxela covering topics as wide ranging as « The Problem of Evil » to « The Diplomacy of the Holy See. »

Mission

The Soup Kitchen group led by Josephine Dini met five times over the past year and served over one thousand homeless people of Geneva and engaged over eighty volunteers. The group worked with Carrefour-rue at Le Jardin de Montbrillant.

Through Global Outreach, led successfully by Joselito Benitez, twenty thousand Swiss francs is made available annually for education related projects. Beneficiaries are required to report on the use of funds received. Last year, successful recipients included organizations located in Lebanon, Philippines, Turkana and Cambodia.

Going Forward

I am very excited to see the reemergence of a young adult group: Young Professional Catholics in Geneva (UNYCP) as well as a Men's group. Both groups have met several times over the last months and we are looking forward to see them in the fall.