

This survey has been undertaken at a difficult point in the parish's history as Cannon McKentey has been ill. The parish, in general, feels that it has managed to maintain its equilibrium despite the shortage of priests and the extra expense incurred.

Despite meetings at all Mass centres and several at Priory Street there are still parishioners who have not been aware or engaged in the process. Our methods of communication have not been effective. Problems with communication has been a constant theme in written and verbal replies to our questionnaires.

First proposal; Better communication lines in the parish. There are 3 main routes; the newsletter, the parish web site and the parish Facebook site. All have their proponents but information is not consistent. These sites should be co-ordinated. Unfortunately there is currently no parish secretary. The facebook site has 2 moderators but the website is not up to date. The parish needs to identify one or more people to manage how information is shared. In future this could be overseen by a parish administrator.

Parishioners asked for more prayer, spiritual meetings and social events. Some people want more integration between the parish groups and others with the wider community on the town. Volunteers are needed and this is acknowledged but many groups have trouble recruiting.

Second Suggestion; A skills list In the past a volunteer fair was held but was felt to be inefficient in recruiting. An alternative would be to ask all parishioners to tell the parish what skills they could offer and what time, even if only a small amount and intermittently, they could offer. Using this, the parish could ask people for specific tasks which may be less threatening than being asked to run something from scratch.

Many people expressed the wish for more support for children especially in the gap between First Holy Communion and Confirmation. There are two Catholic primary schools in Colchester and one Secondary School. These cannot accommodate all the Catholic children in the town. Suggestions have included a Youth Choir, more social events and more spiritual events aimed at children. There has also been some expressed need for more support for parents.

Third proposal; Activities aimed at families with children. Suggestions for groups specifically for children included Youth Choirs, Scouts Association, discos and camps. All of these require volunteers with training who are in short supply. One way forward would be to share some one off events with the neighbouring parish of St Teresa which is starting to run youth groups. Another would be to build on the catechesis groups and the UCM to explore family based events; suggestions have ranged from family prayer groups to family based walks and picnics.

In view of the expressed need for more spiritual education for families and the predicted reduction in priests more training for catechists and the appointment of a Deacon would be advantageous.