

ST. BRIGID'S CHURCH, BALLAN

UPDATE 1

A Special Meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, April 28, 2009 in regard to procedures for the rebuilding of St. Brigid's Church, Ballan.

In Attendance:

Pastoral Council members – Sharon Lehtonen (Chair), Catherine Green, Kate Carey, Michael Kennedy, Carmen Camilleri, Julie Toohey, Anita Lidgett

Finance Committee members – Lin Bowers, Peter Johnson, Marie Shanahan, Shane Carey, Tom Simpson, Theresa Winter

Parish Administration Team - Mark Bromley, Anne McMillan, Vin Dillon, Fr. Barry Ryan

From the Parish of Ararat - Tom Rees

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Mark Bromley welcomed all and Sharon Lehtonen led the Opening Prayer.

2. Fire Damage Update

Mark Bromley provided details of progress to date regarding the rebuilding of the Church.

- The “making safe” of the church building has been completed to everyone's satisfaction.
- The gathering space has been washed, repainted and new carpet and available for use again.
- The structural engineer has declared the church safe and structurally adequate.
- Architects have been engaged (Madin Lyons - Ballarat) to prepare documentation to determine the pre-loss state and condition of the church. The biggest issue will be the roof because of the intricacy of design. Windows are also significant.
- Details of the contents claim are being compiled. This will not be lodged at this stage and it is not yet clear what is to be replaced.
- Once all the documentation is completed, the insurers will call for two tenders to repair the church. The Johns Lyng group will be one of those invited to tender.
- The Johns Lyng group have suggested that the timber for the roof be ordered shortly (may need to come from overseas) and also the windows. These are the two things that will take most time. I have told them not to do this as the Parish needs to decide how it wishes to rebuild. Nevertheless it is becoming urgent, hence the need for the Parish to move on how it wants to rebuild.
- The first site meeting is to be held next week between architects, insurers, loss assessors, engineers, builders and ourselves.

3. The Ararat Experience

Mark Bromley introduced Tom Rees, who was the Parish Coordinator in regard to the restoration of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Ararat after it was damaged by fire on Sunday, April 15, 2007. A DVD of the restoration of the Church from the fire was shown to the meeting and then Tom offered an expression of sympathy and support from the parish of Ararat and spoke of their rebuilding experience. Some important points were:

- An early Parish meeting for all interested persons – with an up to date report from all the key players involved in the restoration process. (Insurance company, Contractor, Stonemason, Liturgical Commission, Contents Contractor, Site Foreman);
- Formation of a Restoration Committee to represent the Parishioners in regard to refurbishment;
- Provision of a Parish Coordinator for the restoration as sought by the Diocesan Business Manager;
- A photographer/IT person to cover the whole project was organised by the Parish;
- Communication to Parishioners and the wider community was a priority - regular updates via Church notice sheet, reports at Mass, regular articles in the newspaper and school bulletins;
- Some extra works outside the scope of the insurance coverage were undertaken at the same time according to the ability of the parish to pay. Funds for the additional works came from savings, trade offs and fundraising.

Peter Johnson thanked Tom and all appreciated the insights he offered in the task ahead.

4. Formation of a Rebuilding Committee

All present supported the idea of establishing a special committee to assist with the process of rebuilding the Church. Insurers and contractors require a parish contact group for various parts of the rebuilding and they are ready to begin work now. Such a committee would ensure:

- that all parishioners are able to have input into the process of rebuilding where appropriate;
- that regular communication is ensured between all interested parties;
- that the parish interests are recognised in the rebuilding process;
- the smooth commencement and continuance of the project where parish input is needed.

Procedures for forming the committee and the contribution members would make to the working of the committee were discussed. As it is important to commence the project as soon as possible, it was decided to compile a list of possible members and invite them to a briefing meeting on Monday, May 4 in the Gathering Room. The purpose of the meeting is to form a Rebuilding Committee of approximately 5 members plus ex officio members - a parish council representative, a finance committee representative and members of the parish administration team (who also represent the Diocesan Finance Office and Diocesan Liturgical Commission). Also, any person in the parish interested in nominating for the committee is invited to do so (see below).

5. The meeting concluded at 9.30pm. Parishioners will continue to be informed through the Parish Notice Sheet and once the Rebuilding Committee is formed, all will be updated through them.

Any parishioner who would consider nomination for the Rebuilding Committee is invited to contact Lin Bowers (5368 1015) and must be available for the briefing meeting on Monday, May 4, 2009.