

PAPAL VISIT ARRANGEMENTS

Please retain this insert for reference later. It will also be available on the website (www.stjosephshutton.org/papalvisit)

Apologies for the length of this insert, but it is worth reading thoroughly. The arrangements are necessarily complicated so please bear this in mind as you read through. A sign-up sheet is available at the back of the church.

The places allocated to St Joseph the Worker parish for both Birmingham and Hyde Park are NOT for the seated area. Our pilgrims will need to stand or sit on the grass or take a small folding seat. I have not been told that there is any size restriction but we need to be sensible! There has been no information about any special or different arrangements if the weather is inclement. If it is wet, you may need an umbrella; if it is as hot as it has been recently, you may be wise to take sun cream.

I have no information about food & drink (or for that matter toilets) nor have I been told that you cannot eat inside the venues. Pilgrims going to Hyde Park will be travelling by train and then tube or bus, so they should be able to stop off on the way to Hyde Park to pick up a picnic, or they can take their own food. Those going to Birmingham for the beatification Mass in Cofton Park, Edgbaston, I would suggest need to take their own food.

Precise timings for Pope Benedict's movements will not be published until about a month before his arrival. The timing for the Mass in Birmingham has been mentioned as both 10.00 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. I don't yet know which it will be. For Hyde Park, the Vigil will start with celebrations around 2.00 p.m. although Pope Benedict will not actually arrive in Hyde Park until later.

PILGRIM LEADERS

- Each group of Pilgrims going to one or other of the venues will be led by a PILGRIM LEADER whose responsibility will be to travel with the group they are leading.
- He/she will be required to present identification at the security controls when they arrive at either Cofton Park or Hyde Park. They will need two forms of identity, one of which must be photographic. They will be required to have with them a list of those in their group. They will need to be able to vouch for the fact that those on the list are known to or within the parish. They will then be allowed to enter as a group as long as they are all wearing the PILGRIM PASS.
- The list will contain all the information which has been collected by Parish Co-ordinators as set out in paragraph 4(g) of Information Sheet No 3.
- Parish Co-ordinators do not have to be Pilgrim Leaders. Whilst they may be going to one or other of the venues, I suspect that few, if any, will be going to both, bearing in mind that the Vigil is not expected to end until about 9.00 p.m. on the Saturday evening and the coaches for Birmingham will be leaving very early on the Sunday morning! We may well need Pilgrim Leaders for both venues.
- Parishes must appoint Pilgrim Leaders, as many as they consider appropriate bearing in mind that all the members of the group for which the Leader is responsible must arrive at the security points at the same time. Separate lists must be drawn up for each group, so that the Leader has a list of those in his/her group. It is entirely up to each parish how many leaders/groups they have.
- Full details –name address (inc Postcode) best phone contact number, mobile number and e-mail address of ALL Pilgrim Leaders must be sent to the Diocese co-ordinator as soon as possible. I realise that this is impractical but the organisers are actually asking for it by this Friday. So, please do your best to get what you can to me by e-mail by early next week.

WE ALSO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPOINT A PARISH REPRESENTATIVE FOR HYDE PARK

The idea is that a parishioner from each parish in the country comes to Central London for the day on Saturday 18 September. They will be part of a group who will form a three thousand strong banner procession during the evening Vigil of prayer with the Pope, and they will go home with a candle and framed picture for the parish, blessed by Pope Benedict.

The organizers have asked that the person who represents us comes with a parish banner. This should be no larger than two foot by three foot, and fixed on a four foot pole. It should not have hanging tassels or ribbons, and should be able to be rolled up around the pole. The dimensions are important – with so many banners, anything larger will obstruct the view of people behind. I can arrange this banner if necessary – but if we do need one, then it needs to be ordered quickly.

For those that cannot or do not wish to travel, it will be possible to follow all aspects of the visit via live coverage on the website - the "virtual visit". Also the tangible symbol of the candle and picture, blessed by Pope Benedict, can be brought to the homes of elderly and housebound parishioners, and the person chosen to carry the banner should ideally be someone with the confidence to come back and "tell their story" to the rest of the parish, perhaps even on the Sunday morning, or the following weekend. There will also be space on the website - www.thepapalvisit.org.uk - for them to share their testimony about being part of the event.

The name and details of the person representing the parish must be provided no later than 30 July, so we need to decide quickly.

In terms of "choosing" a parishioner, how we select them is up to us, but points to bear in mind are their confidence as a speaker to the parish and in offering website testimony and their stamina and fitness - the day will include large crowds and a fair walk just to get to the venue; there will be a lot of standing prior to the procession beginning, and the procession route itself will be at least a mile. The day will begin in Central London at 12.00 and end at 21.30.

Although the representative is additional to the numbers allocated to parishes, he/she will need to register for the Pilgrim Pack as with all other participants. A parish may decide that as this person is the representative of his/her parish, that it will contribute his/her £10. Otherwise, it should be collected and paid into the parish bank account with all other contributions.

The procession in London is a chance for a powerful representation of the church nationally, and we hope that even if a larger group is going elsewhere, this is an opportunity an individual parishioner will take on.

COLLECTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Each parish should collect the contributions from Pilgrims (£25 from those going to Birmingham and £10 from those going to Hyde Park). The money collected should be banked in the parish account and we will be debited by the diocese after the event with what we should have collected. Any difference will be either because we have agreed to subsidise someone or we have failed to collect a contribution from someone. Please note the above does not apply to those young people going under the auspices of the Diocesan Youth Service. I do not know what arrangements have been made about payment for them.

DEADLINES

Cut off for collecting names.

I have not been given a specific cut off date. We can continue to collect names up to the limits for the parish and, if necessary, put others on a waiting list so that they can be added if someone drops out for any reason. If I get a cut off date I will let you know.

PILGRIM LEADERS

Names as soon as possible please

PARISH REPRESENTATIVES FOR HYDE PARK

The deadline is 30 July.

PROGRESS REPORTS

I need to report weekly to the Diocese regarding progress on all of the above fronts. Progress reports must be filed on a Tuesday so please contact me by phone (01277 223078) or email (ian.restell@design-portfolio.co.uk) as soon as you able.

I will be in touch (probably via a special edition of the newsletter or via the website, or both) as and when more information becomes available. However, in the meantime, you have queries which you think I might be able to answer, please let me know.

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