

MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Most parishioners will be aware that we as a parish will be facing times of change and challenge in the near future.

With the impending retirement of Monsignor John next year, coupled with the critical shortage of priests in the Archdiocese, there is a very real possibility that even if we are fortunate enough to be given a new priest, he will probably not be full time in our parish. Thus we need to plan for the future and be prepared to accept change.

It has become very obvious that unfortunately we will be unable to keep three Masses every weekend and we will have to reduce to two Masses. Recently, Monsignor John's ill health and the difficulty in obtaining a priest to cover for him, highlights the pressures to service the many Masses on weekends. For this reason, we would like to reduce the workload for Monsignor John on the weekends by proposing to reduce the three Masses every weekend to two.

Three into two is a difficult equation raising the question as to which Mass do we omit. While the Parish Pastoral Council is aware that the least attended Mass is the Saturday Evening vigil the greatest difficulty in the future will be in having two Masses on the Sunday morning. Thus with much discussion, including valuable input from Monsignor John, it has been decided to trial merging our two Sunday morning Masses to one Mass at 9.30am.

This will of course cause some distress and compromise to many of us, but in the long run the change will also have some advantages for us all.

It will enable us to come together to celebrate our diversity as one community and thus strengthen our relationship with each other and with God. It is also a change that we have taken rather than one that is forced upon us. It will enable us to consolidate as a parish and place us in good stead to be able to cope with the great challenges that will soon be upon us.

It is proposed that this trial will commence on the first weekend of February 2009. Be assured that this decision has not been taken lightly and has only been made after much prayerful thought and discussion.

7th December 2008