

THE MISSION IN OUR AREA



18 February 2017

Dear Father,

I am writing to you to ask for your guidance and help.

You will be aware that one of the main tasks that I have as your Archbishop is the appointment of priests to the parishes. In many ways it is one of the most important and sacred tasks of a bishop. It is also one of the most difficult.

As you know we have fewer priests and people at Mass than we had in recent times. There is also a number clergy preparing to retire from active ministry after a lifetime of service to the Church. So I need your advice. I am asking you, clergy and people together, to look carefully at your Pastoral Area and to see how we can best serve the mission of the Church in your part of the Diocese. I want to best use the resources of priests, people and buildings that we have. I would be very grateful if you could share with me your ideas of how we can go forward with fewer priests and perhaps fewer buildings too.

I have asked your Dean to call clergy and people together to help me in the forward planning that we need to embark upon. I know that many of you took part in the Leaving Safe Harbours process and we have been able to put in place some of the recommendations that came from Pastoral Area plans, I thank you for that. You may wish to revisit the planning that you did then. I ask you to share with me in this present task, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we can be the Church that God has called us to be.

Yours in sincerely in Christ,

Archbishop of Liverpool

Archbishop's House | 19 Salisbury Road | Liverpool | L19 0PH

Archbishop Malcolm asks your advice

Southport drafted its Pastoral Plan in 2014. We have implemented aspects of this plan:

- Our Lady of Lourdes, St Joseph (2001) and joined April (2017) by St Teresa
- St John Stone and Sacred Heart (2001 / 2015)
- St Marie and St Patrick (2016)
- Holy Family includes the Hospital Chaplaincy

The Archbishop is asking us to look at our Pastoral Area again, with the guidance of these questions:

1. How can we best serve the mission of the Church with fewer people at Mass and fewer priests?
2. What is the best use of our resources, priests, people and buildings?

The Archbishop's letter to his priests, and some statistics can be found above and overleaf:

- You can write to the Archbishop via our Dean, Fr Atli Jónsson, 40 York Road, Southport PR8 2AY, or via email: ajonsson@btinternet.com
- HeartStone parish will discuss this at the Open Forum on 16th May in Sacred Heart Hall (7pm for 7.30)

2017 STATISTICS

- 163 parishes (183 churches).
 - 13 committed to the care of a Religious order
 - 150 served by our diocesan priests or others.
- 144 non-retired priests,
 - 107 are Parish Priests
 - 9 Assistants
 - 6 Chaplains
 - 6 other Diocesan posts
 - 6 Working outside the Archdiocese
 - 10 not currently in post
- 56 retired (or imminently to be so)
- 20 of the 144 active priests are over 75
- 25 priests are aged 50 or under
- An estimated 20 Religious priests are active in the parishes committed to their care.
- Mass attendance in 1990 was 137,000. In 2016 it was 46,879. That is a drop of almost 2/3rds.
- *Between 2001-2015 we had 65 retirements or deaths, and 23 ordinations. This is a yearly average of nearly 4½ retirements or deaths and 1½ ordinations; or a net loss of 3 priests per year. Future predictions should be based on an average loss of 5.5 per year.*

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
318	304	305	287	279	273	271	263	261	245
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
241	228	225	214	209	207	193	187	187	183
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
170	159	155	153	152	151	154	144	139?	134?
2020								2030?	
128?								73 ?	