

July 2017

Following a meeting of clergy and parish representatives from our Pastoral Area it was agreed that we would try to work in smaller units or groups of parishes as we face changes and new opportunities in the local Church

The 'south' unit comprises the parishes of Star of the Sea and St. Thomas, St. Edmund and Ss. Peter and Paul. When the three parish priests met recently we decided to have a social gathering in the autumn so that we could get to know each other better and move forward towards other pastoral initiatives.

There are many good groups in our area, such as UCM, SVP, Eucharistic Ministers, Bereavement Care teams, and so on. A Directory of these groups and activities may be helpful and in some cases their membership might be combined so as to serve the local community even more effectively.

The chaplaincy of the schools is an aspect of our work together. The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Healing Masses on a regular basis would be a further example of pastoral care of people. An on-going revision of Mass times, how we provide the sacraments and our Sacramental programmes will be needed so that, with fewer priests, adequate provision can be sustained.

We are fortunate that there is ample opportunity for Mass and the Sacraments in our area. It goes without saying that those who can are always welcome to attend Mass in any of the local churches. Some people have kindly offered to help others with transport to and from Mass in the area. An updated list of all local Mass venues and times will be published in due course.

In our own parish, from January 2018, there will be one Sunday Mass only and it will be at 10.30 am. The Liturgy will be arranged in a way that is appropriate to the different age groups present at this Mass, with the Little Church and Children's Mass (fourth Sunday) continuing as at present and the parish choir leading the singing. When a fifth Sunday in the month occurs some parts of the Mass will be sung in Latin. The Saturday evening Mass will remain at 5.45 pm. The Monday and Friday morning Masses will continue at 9.10 am. Other Services and Morning Prayer/Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will remain unchanged but from January 2018 the Tuesday evening Mass will be discontinued.

All of this will depend on the cooperation and understanding of all, and, with God's help, we can work more closely together in the interesting times ahead.

Fr. John